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A History of European Art

Taught by: Professor William Kloss, Independent Art Historian,
 The Smithsonian Associates, Smithsonian Institution

Part 1

Course Guidebook



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William Kloss

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Professor Kloss is an independent art historian and scholar who lectures and writes about a wide range of European and American art. He was educated at Oberlin College, where he earned a B.A. in English and an M.A. in Art History.

Professor Kloss continued his postgraduate work at the University of Michigan, where he held a teaching fellowship. He was awarded a Fulbright Fellowship for two years of study in Rome and was an assistant professor of art history at the University of Virginia, where he taught 17th - and 18th -century European art and 19th -century French art. His courses were very highly rated by both undergraduate and graduate students.

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Professor Kloss serves on the Committee for the Preservation of the White House, a presidential appointment he has held since 1990. He is the author of several books, including *Art in the White House: A Nation's Pride*, and most recently, co-author of *United States Senate Catalogue of Fine Art*. He has also written articles published in *Winterthur Portfolio*, *Antiques*, *American Art Quarterly*, and *Antiques & Fine Art* and is the lecturer for The Teaching Company's course *Great Artists of the Italian Renaissance*.

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A History of European Art

Scope:

In this course, we'll survey the great monuments of European painting, sculpture, and architecture from the age of Charlemagne to the onset of World War II. We'll spend time together examining major works by the greatest visual artists of a millennium of Western civilization, including extensive considerations of such important artists as Giotto, Michelangelo, Leonardo, Caravaggio, Rembrandt, and Monet. We'll place these artists and their masterpieces in the political, religious, and social context of their time, so that we have a more profound understanding of both why an artwork was created and how it responded to a particular set of historical circumstances. In the course of this survey, we'll witness the birth and fruition of a brilliant European civilization, emerging from the shadow of the Roman Empire and the Middle Ages to become one of the most dominant cultural forces in history.

In Lecture One, we'll set the stage for our survey by providing a chronological overview of the course. I'll also introduce the five essential aspects in the analysis of works of art: subject, interpretation, style, context, and emotion. An appreciation of each of these individual elements is crucial to our understanding of artists and their works. In the first lecture, we'll illustrate this approach by analyzing several representative masterpieces. Throughout the course, we'll employ these key elements to look at paintings, sculpture, and prints. We'll also identify and define the five areas of subject matter that constitute the major categories of art: narrative or historical art, portraiture, landscape, still life, and scenes of daily life. During the survey, we will see how each era emphasized certain subjects in art to communicate important societal and political ideas and values. Throughout the survey, one of our goals will be to learn to take *time* with art—to look at it, consider it, and feel it without haste—in the hopes that an understanding of art can change and enhance our lives.

In Lectures Two through Ten we'll explore the artistic output of the Middle Ages, from the early architectural monuments of the Carolingian Empire to the massive cathedrals and exquisite sculpture of the French Gothic style. Despite its former reputation, this was a period of great creativity and provides a necessary background to our extensive consideration of the achievements of the Renaissance that followed. We will spend a significant amount of time, Lectures Eleven through Twenty-Seven, examining the early development and the blossoming of the Renaissance in both Italy and the north. The Renaissance was both a rebirth of interest in Classical literature and art and a revival of interest in learning that, together, led to a reevaluation of man's place in the world. We will discuss the place of Humanism and Neo-Platonic philosophy in the Renaissance—both of which were reflected in different styles in art of the period. We will note how the conceptual advances of the time, beginning with Giotto's approach to the illusionistic creation of space, led to a revolution in the

expressive possibilities of narrative art. We'll trace this accomplishment through the works of some of the greatest artists in history, from Masaccio and Donatello, at the outset of the 15th century, to the acknowledged geniuses of the High Renaissance, including Leonardo, Michelangelo, Raphael, Bellini, and Titian. We'll also discuss the tremendous innovations in Renaissance architecture, from Brunelleschi's dome for the cathedral in Florence to the creation of the new Basilica of St. Peter's in Rome in the High Renaissance. We will also address the Renaissance in the north, with considerations of the art of Jan van Eyck, Dürer, Bosch, and Bruegel, among many other important masters.

In Lectures Twenty-Eight through Thirty-Eight, we'll commence with a discussion of the evolution of Baroque style in the art of Caravaggio and the Bolognese Carracci family. We'll spend a substantial amount of time examining the presiding genius of the time in Rome, the sculptor and architect Gian Lorenzo Bernini. We'll continue from Italy to a broader view of European Baroque art, from Velázquez in Spain to Rubens and Rembrandt in the Netherlands, to Versailles and the court of Louis XIV in France. Not only will we discuss the major masters of the era, but we'll spend time on many of the extraordinary yet lesser known geniuses of the period. I'll then discuss the 18th-century reactions to the Baroque by introducing the Rococo style of Watteau, Boucher, and Fragonard. It is at this time that we will see the nations of Europe becoming increasingly politically and culturally unified, sharing an artistic language expressed in the varying accents of Italy, Spain, Holland, Belgium, and France.

Finally, in Lectures Thirty-Nine through Forty-Eight, we'll examine the beginnings of modern European art with the Neoclassical movement of the late 18th century. We'll discuss the work of David that defined the Neoclassical style, and we will detail the work of the great Romantic artists Goya, Géricault, and Delacroix. We'll see how the Neoclassical and Romantic art of the early 19th century gave way to the Realism of Courbet and Manet, which in turn, led to the Impressionist achievements of Degas and Monet. We'll have the opportunity to discuss the reactions to Impressionism embodied in the work of Gauguin, Van Gogh, and Seurat and reserve time to discuss the seminal contributions of Cezanne and Rodin to the art of the 20th century. As we move into the new century, we again see a period of internationalism in art, as well as a greater variety of artistic styles and movements, all of which responded to, were conditioned by, or were created by the events leading up to World War I. We'll conclude with a consideration of the early movements of the century, including Fauvism, Cubism, German Expressionism, Dada, and Surrealism, and the pivotal role of the two towering geniuses of early modern art, Picasso and Matisse.

Lecture One

Approaches to European Art

Scope: This first lecture of our survey offers some ideas about looking at art—how we do it and why we do it. We'll set a starting date for our survey and define five elements in art—subject, interpretation, style, context, and emotion—that will be our touchstones as we look at hundreds of works of art over these 48 lectures and learn how art can affect our lives.

Outline

- I. We start with a question: Where does one begin a historical survey course? No matter where we jump in, there is always a known prelude, always the desire to begin earlier than the announced starting point.
 - A. We will start with the date 800 A.D.—the year of Charlemagne's coronation as Holy Roman Emperor. This convenient date may be regarded as the beginning of the first true European civilization, distinct from the Roman Empire.
 - B. The ancient Greek and Roman civilizations preceded and prepared the way for the new Europe and are always its background. Throughout this course, we will refer to the artistic achievements of Classical antiquity and its importance to European art. But our starting point will be the birth of Europe, and our chronological path will be its evolution into a coherent civilization.
 - C. These 48 lectures are not evenly divided among the centuries. For example, we will survey medieval art in nine lectures, an overview that only begins to explore an era of great creativity.
 - D. Medieval art is the background for the next great era in European art, the Renaissance. Though encompassing only about two centuries, the Renaissance is the central achievement of European civilization, and we will devote 17 lectures to it, including 11 on Italian art and architecture.
 - E. We will discuss the Baroque era and the 18th century in a dozen lectures. This period is truly European, politically and culturally. Here we find one Europe composed of many national powers, with a shared artistic language expressed in the national accents of Italy, Spain, Holland, Belgium, and France.
 - F. The last nine lectures will cover the 19th century and provide an introduction to the 20th century. The French Revolution and the Napoleonic period that followed it established France as the de facto capital of European art in the 19th century, and we will study its art from Romanticism through Impressionism.

G. We have only recently left the 20th century and have not yet come to terms with its art; however, our quick dip into the early years of 20th-century European art will reveal the vitality, inventiveness, conviction, and passion of modern art.

II. Art history is, obviously, the study of the visual arts of a particular period or civilization. But it also a guide to *looking*—a foundation for viewing art with understanding and pleasure.

- A. We will focus on five elements: subject, interpretation, style, context, and emotion. Although we will address them singly, these elements always overlap and intermingle. My aim is for you to begin to see how and why works of art affect us, that you begin to look at art consciously, and that you realize that looking at art requires time.
- B. Every work of art has a *subject*. The way the subject is expressed in art is the artist's *interpretation*, and the artistic means of interpretation is the artist's *style*. Note that this is not the same as the style of a period, though it is related; within the Gothic period style, for example, each artist still has a personal style.
- C. The *context* can be of the moment (the events of an artist's life), of contemporary political events (the French Revolution), of the historical period (the Renaissance), or of long-term cultural determinants (in Europe, Christianity).
- D. *Emotion* is harder to define, because it is so instinctive on the part of both artist and viewer. We may easily misinterpret the intended emotion, and the further the art is from our own time, the more easily we do so. For this reason, our own emotional response must always be measured against what we can learn of the artist and the period.

III. First, let's focus on subject.

- A. Artists of the Renaissance and the Baroque were especially fond of subjects drawn from Classical Greek and Roman culture, including mythology. The myths are so common in art that we must know these stories, if only in summary.
- B. Our first examples are two famous works with mythological subjects.
 - 1. First, we see Titian's *Bacchus and Ariadne* (c. 1522). This brilliantly painted work is vivid in color and motion. It is possible simply to revel in the physical beauty of the painting, but we miss out on a much richer experience if we don't know the myth.
 - 2. Bacchus is the god of wine, but in the Classical world, his *passion* was understood as the opposite of *reason*. The joyous procession of Bacchus and his caravan of revelers was linked to ancient fertility rites.
 - 3. The meeting of Bacchus and Ariadne is the love story central to this myth. Leading his followers in his chariot, Bacchus discovers

Ariadne abandoned by Theseus on the island of Naxos. Instantly smitten, he leaps—almost floats—down in a trance of love to make her his bride and, ultimately, to give her immortality as a constellation of stars, as already seen in the heavens above her.

- 4. Our next example is *Apollo and Daphne* (c. 1622–1625) by Bernini. If we don't know this myth of Apollo's love for the nymph Daphne, as retold by Ovid in his *Metamorphoses*, then what are we to make of our observation that her fingers are changing into branches and her toes are taking root?
- 5. And if we guess, by her fearful expression or his apprehensive one, that her transformation must have something to do with his pursuit, we still would not know that she has prayed for this metamorphosis to thwart him. There is a certain melancholy in her success, because she didn't wait long enough to learn that he was a god.
- 6. The story is a memorable one, and the sculpture is a magnificent expression of it in intractable marble, in which such a metamorphosis seems especially impressive. Knowledge of the myth—the subject—is essential.
- 7. That these two subjects were also *interpreted* by the artists is obvious even if we had never seen other examples. For instance, Bernini could have shown Daphne almost completely transformed into a laurel tree and Apollo seated dejectedly on a rock.

IV. To explore interpretation, we'll look at three versions of one subject: St. Matthew.

- A. The New Testament begins with the accounts of the life of Jesus written by the four evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. It must be understood that here, as always in our discussion of Christian art, we are taking the accounts of the saints and the biblical narratives at face value, because that is what the artists did.
- B. Each of the evangelists has a symbolic figure who accompanies him or stands in for him, and the symbol of St. Matthew is a winged man, an angel. In art, the saint's angel is often seen with him while the evangelist writes his Gospel, as if inspiring or even dictating it to him. But this simple subject can take many different forms.
- C. First, we see *St. Matthew* (c. 816–835 A.D.) by an unknown Carolingian artist.
 - 1. St. Matthew is seated, writing his Gospel. Where is his symbol, the angel? Matthew is situated in a landscape—some plants are at his feet, and there is a hill behind him, crowned by some trees and a church-like structure. On the right side stands the angel, holding a scroll that unwinds in St. Matthew's direction.
 - 2. The visual connection—the related shapes—of that scroll and St. Matthew's ink horn is the artist's way of suggesting the divine inspiration or dictation that directs Matthew's writing.

3. But the small painting does much more than show us Matthew writing his Gospel while the angel inspires him. The artist has also tried to understand the saint's state of mind while writing and to convey that state of mind to us in his picture—that is the artist's interpretation.
 4. The artist has imagined that St. Matthew urgently wanted to pass on the "good news" to his readers; thus, he devises a *style* to express this idea. The style is intensely linear, and the lines of the saint's robe are crisp, curvilinear, insistently repetitive, and densely packed—full of energy. In his concentration, St. Matthew hunches over his writing table, and the curved lines of the hill behind him echo and reinforce this posture and its meaning.
 5. We often look first to the human face for emotional cues, and we find them here. St. Matthew's eyebrows are raised in concentration; his eyes are open wide. His hair is not merely curly, but the curls snap with the same intensity found in the folds of his robe.
- D. Almost 800 years later, the Italian painter Caravaggio painted the same subject—twice in fact. We see his first version, *St. Matthew and the Angel* (c. 1600–1601, destroyed).
1. How did Caravaggio imagine his St. Matthew? He imagined that St. Matthew was not merely unlearned but seemingly illiterate. We see that the angel is not just dictating but guiding the saint's hand.
 2. The strain of the task is apparent in St. Matthew's furrowed brow, his brawny forearm, and his tensely crossed legs. His whole body is focused on the mental challenge and is in complete contrast to the casual, curved pose of the angel and his elegant hand. But the angel, too, is solidly physical and literally down-to-earth.
 3. The patrons whose family chapel this painting was intended for rejected it as improper and indecorous. They failed to understand Caravaggio's intention, which was to make the evangelist a recognizable Italian of his day, with whom an average visitor to the church could readily identify and through whom that visitor could feel the importance of the life of Jesus being so laboriously recorded.
- E. Because the patron disliked the first painting, Caravaggio painted a second version: *St. Matthew and the Angel* (c. 1602).
1. Now the evangelist is dressed in flowing robes, suggesting an ancient philosopher, and the angel stays in the air. He is still dictating, but there is no physical contact between the figures.
 2. St. Matthew is serious, intelligent, and completely literate. Notice also that St. Matthew is set further back in space, at a greater distance from us than he is in either the 9th-century book painting or Caravaggio's first version. It is a fine painting but without the profound originality of the first rendering.

- V. In looking at contrasting interpretations of St. Matthew, we have also dealt explicitly with style. We couldn't do otherwise because style is the means of the artist's interpretation.
- A. The history of art is rich in styles, and every style holds its particular expressive potential. It was once popular to judge art with a Darwinian assumption of progress, and this is still implicit in many people's response to art. Earlier styles whose language is remote from us are sometimes considered as lesser artistic expressions.
 - B. For purposes of comparison, we see two paintings of the same subject, made two centuries apart, in contrasting styles: a *Deposition* (c. 1435) by Rogier van der Weyden and a painting with the same title made about 1612–1614 by Peter Paul Rubens. Both paintings depict the lowering of the dead body of Christ from the cross.
 1. Van der Weyden cares nothing for space except the shallow box in which the figures are gathered—a space that is not part of "real" space, not a landscape setting, but it suggests a container for painted sculpture. Yet the gold background of that box heightens the already extreme pathos of the grieving figures.
 2. Rubens places his figures outside at night, but the darkness obscures the landscape setting, isolating the figures from the rest of the world as much as van der Weyden's box did. And Rubens's black background is as much an amplifier of feeling as van der Weyden's gold.
 3. In each painting, the brilliant red robe of St. John intensifies the emotion, although in van der Weyden's painting, the saint assists the fainting Virgin Mary, calling attention to the way her body echoes her son's; in Rubens's painting, St. John supports the body of Christ, the main subject.
 4. In each painting, the body of Christ dominates, one presented to us in an angular, stark, frontal pose and the other, slumped and lifeless, sliding down a long diagonal of sorrow. One may prefer one painter over the other, one style over the other, but one cannot deny that each artist has found a consummate expression of death and response to death. The particular expressivity of each artist could be achieved only in his particular, personal style.
- VI. In our discussion of interpretation and style, we have also been deeply concerned with context. Once again, it could not have been otherwise, because the subjects we were dealing with were Christian subjects.
- A. Christianity informed much of European culture throughout the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the Baroque, and it remained a wellspring of subjects and themes well into the 18th century. We will spend a good deal of time looking at religious art, but to teach religious art is not to teach religion. One does not have to believe to be moved by the cultural expressions of religion.

B. We see Pierre Patel's Perspective View of Versailles. Just as one does not have to believe in a religion to be moved by its cultural expressions, neither must one believe in the divine right of kings or absolute monarchy to be awed by Louis XIV's great palace at Versailles, a palace that would never have been built in an era that was not autocratic and absolutist. We may disapprove of the political system, but we remain impressed by the achievement, which resulted from its political context.

C. Neither do we have to experience a political revolution to recognize the passionate response of a painter who witnessed the events of July 1830 in Paris, when the recently restored Bourbon regime was overthrown in an uprising. We see one response in Delacroix's *Liberty Leading the People* (1830).

1. Delacroix could still think in the traditional allegorical mode, in which "Liberty" could be personified as a bare-breasted heroic woman carrying the flag but leading the real people of Paris forward in their struggle.
2. The power of contemporary events can stir the deepest emotions of an artist, even Delacroix, who was anything but politically engaged, and through his genius, Delacroix could enable us, long afterward, to share his response without having experienced the event.

VII. Delacroix's response to a political context was also a profoundly emotional response. Each of us responds in our own way to events, circumstances, other persons, places, and experiences. Our response to joy or grief in life will also be evoked by the portrayals of those emotions in art.

A. A particular example is our innate human response to a loving embrace, as we see in Giotto's *Meeting at the Golden Gate* (c. 1305) and Rembrandt's *The Jewish Bride* (c. 1668–1669).

1. Giotto's fresco shows an aged couple, Joachim and Anna, who had been childless and who have just learned that Anna will bear a child (Mary, who will become the mother of Jesus). They rush to find each other and meet at the city gate.
2. Although the couple is grouped with others in an architectural setting, we focus at once on their memorable embrace. In fact, the arched gate leads our eyes to them, and its curve echoes their embrace. Their separate bodies fuse into a single loving form.
3. Rembrandt's painting brings us into the immediate presence of this Jewish couple, whose names are not known. They are shown in a profoundly solemn embrace in which they do not even look directly at each other, yet they are ardently united by tender touch and by the warmth of her scarlet skirt and his golden sleeve—a sleeve that itself is the essence of an embrace.

4. The couple in this portrait has been painted in the guise of the loving Isaac and Rebecca from the Old Testament book of Genesis; knowing this deepens the meaning of the painting.
5. The emotion in these paintings is both personal and religious, expressed in different styles, but equally capable of touching us.

B. As biblical and mythological themes became less common in the 19th century, the emotional content of art was often more directly related to individual pleasures and sorrows. Thus, art increasingly reflected the modern European middle class that arose in the 19th century and turned to their lives and experiences for subjects and for emotional expression. One great example may suffice: Renoir's *Luncheon of the Boating Party* (1881).

1. We feel a satisfying, complete pleasure in Renoir's famous painting. It seems so obvious; that is, we understand it—we feel that it speaks our language. But does it? No, it is merely much closer to our own time and free from references drawn from anything outside itself.
2. The pleasure that we feel in this painting comes from Renoir's own joy in the scene and his mastery of color, characterization, and composition—a composition that leaves a place at the table for us, the concave opening in front. Everything combines to convince us that we, too, are included in this long-ago gathering of friends.
3. The red-orange color throughout the painting is used like a thread to weave the scene together into a tapestry. The grouping of figures also makes us feel as if we are a part of this world.

VIII. We have been using these examples of European art to provide a foundation for looking at the hundreds of works of art that this course will present. I have tried to suggest what pleasures lie in store for us, and in the process, I hope that I have hinted at my conviction that art is important, something that when properly seen and considered and felt, can change our lives for the better.

Works Discussed:

Titian:

Bacchus and Ariadne, c. 1522, oil on canvas, 5' 9 1/2" x 6' 3 3/4" (176.5 x 191 cm), National Gallery, London, Great Britain.

Bernini:

Apollo and Daphne, 1622–25, marble, 8' H (24 m H), Galleria Borghese, Rome, Italy.

Artist unknown:

St. Matthew, from the *Gospel Book of Archbishop Ebbo of Reims (The Épernay Gospel)*, c. 816–835, ink and colors on vellum, 10 ¼ x 8 ¾" (26 x 22.2 cm), Bibliothèque Municipale, Épernay, France.

Caravaggio:

St. Matthew and the Angel (destroyed), c. 1600–01, oil on canvas, 7' 7 ¼" x 6' (2.31 x 1.82 m), for the Contarelli Chapel, Church of S. Luigi dei Francesi, Rome, Italy.

St. Matthew and the Angel, prob. 1602, oil on canvas, 9' 8 ¾" x 6' 2 ½" (295 x 195 cm), Contarelli Chapel, Church of S. Luigi dei Francesi, Rome, Italy.

Rogier van der Weyden:

Deposition, c. 1435, oil on panel, 7' 2 ½" x 8' 7" (220 x 262 cm), Museo del Prado, Madrid, Spain.

Peter Paul Rubens:

Deposition Altarpiece, 1612–14, oil on panel, central panel: 13' 9 ¼" x 10' 2" (4.19 x 3.1 m), Antwerp Cathedral, Antwerp, Belgium.

Pierre Patel:

Perspective View of Versailles.

Eugène Delacroix:

Liberty Leading the People, 1830, oil on canvas, 8' 6 ¼" x 10' 8" (260 x 325 cm), Musée du Louvre, Paris, France.

Giotto:

Meeting at the Golden Gate, c. 1305, fresco, Scrovegni (Arena) Chapel, Padua, Italy.

Rembrandt van Rijn:

The Jewish Bride, 1668–69, oil on canvas, 4' x 5' 5 ½" (121.5 x 166.5 cm), Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

Pierre-Auguste Renoir:

Luncheon of the Boating Party, 1881, oil on canvas, 4' 3" x 5' 8" (129.5 x 172.7 cm), The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C., USA.

Further Reading:

Mary Acton, *Learning to Look at Paintings*.

Anthony F. Janson, *History of Art*.

Fred S. Kleiner and Christin J. Mamiya, *Gardner's Art Through the Ages*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Differentiate between the terms *interpretation* and *style* as used in this lecture.
2. Think of a work of art that has spoken to you in some way and try to explain its attraction.

Lecture Two

Carolingian and Ottonian Art

Scope: Before we begin our survey of European art with the Carolingian dynasty, we take a brief backward glance to the illuminations produced by Irish monks in the early Middle Ages. Here, we see the animal style of the nomadic German tribes combined with Celtic elements to make a statement about the earlier pagan world and its domestication by Christianity and the divine order. We then compare early Byzantine architecture in the Church of San Vitale in Ravenna with the architecture of Charlemagne's Palatine Chapel in Aachen, noting the light, insubstantial atmosphere of the former and the heavy, muscular appearance of the latter, a throwback to Greco-Roman antiquity. Finally, we look at two masterpieces of narrative art, the bronze doors of the Abbey Church of St. Michael at Hildesheim in northern Germany and the Bayeux Tapestry, a depiction of the events leading up to the Battle of Hastings in England in 1066.

Outline

- I. We begin our survey historically with the great Charlemagne and his coronation as emperor by Pope Leo III in Rome on Christmas Day in the year 800.
 - A. This event is a convenient marker for the beginning of a centralized political power for the first time in Europe since the dissolution of the Roman Empire in the west in 476.
 - B. The Germanic tribes known as the Franks had moved into Roman Gaul, replacing the last of the Roman leaders; they accepted Christianity and reached the zenith of their political influence during what we now call the Carolingian dynasty, named for Charlemagne (c. 742–814).
 - C. We will take one backward glance before we begin with this starting point, however, to the Irish missionaries of the 7th and 8th centuries and their artistic legacy.
- II. During the period following the Roman Empire, the only unifying force on the European continent was the Roman Catholic Church, whose spread was made possible by the astonishing Roman expansion across the continent and into Britain.
 - A. But Christian missionaries went even further than the Romans. Ireland, unlike England, had never been part of the Roman Empire, and the missionaries who reached Ireland in the early Middle Ages found a religiously responsive population, but one that had no interest in Roman or Mediterranean culture.

B. When some Irish Christians sought to deepen their faith, they congregated in hermit groups, away from the cities, and spread throughout Ireland and Britain. These hermit communities developed into the first monasteries, and from these, Irish monks set out across Europe, preaching and founding new monasteries as they went.

C. In these Irish monasteries, countless copies of the Bible and other Christian texts were produced. The illuminations of these texts—their painted decorations—combined the animal style of the nomadic German tribes with Celtic elements and used elaborate ornamental designs rather than pictures of biblical events.

1. Our example shows a *carpet page*, with a design in the shape of a cross, from *The Lindisfarne Gospels* (c. 700 A.D.)
2. The embellishment of this book page is staggeringly intricate. Compressed with manic intensity into the smallest spaces, the design consists, in part, of stylized, fantastic animals—snakelike bodies with birdlike beaks—and, in part, of circles and sweeping, interlaced curves.
3. On this page, the cross dominates all other elements of the design, as if the fierce, pagan world of the animal style has been domesticated by the divine order.

III. The Romans themselves, beginning notably with the emperor Constantine, were sometimes converts to Christianity, and this strengthened the Catholic presence in the Germanic and Gallic lands. Indeed, Constantine spent much time at Trier, on the Mosel, a city founded by the emperor Augustus.

A. A short distance north of Trier, the city of Aachen became the capital of Charlemagne. During Charlemagne's reign, Aachen witnessed a cultural revival in arts and letters. What survives of the visual artistic activity, however, is almost entirely in the minor or decorative arts, such as gold and other metalwork, ivory carving, and illuminated manuscripts. Murals, relief sculpture, and mosaics existed, according to documents, but most have vanished.

B. The palace built by Charlemagne at Aachen has also vanished, but his palace chapel stands as a testament to his interest in the art of the Italian peninsula.

1. Charlemagne had first visited Rome in Easter week of 774, where he consolidated his ties to the Roman Church by confirming its Italian territorial possessions, which would become the basis of the Papal States. He also made three military forays over the Alps for campaigns in northern Italy.
2. On one or more of these Italian trips, Charlemagne visited Ravenna, on the Adriatic coast, once an important Roman port. The capital of the western Roman Empire had been moved to Ravenna in 402 because the city offered protection from the barbarian invasions. Then, in the mid-6th century, the Byzantine emperors

had established their court there, and the first of these emperors, Justinian, had built the Church of San Vitale (547, Ravenna).

3. The polygonal S. Vitale is quite massive outside, but inside it is distinguished by much light, reflected from some of the finest and most important mosaics of the early Byzantine period. Charlemagne was obviously deeply impressed by the architecture, and of course, he was keenly aware of its symbolic significance as imperial architecture.
4. As we see in the Palatine Chapel (805, Aachen), Charlemagne and his artistic advisors imported the ground plan, as well as the actual columns and bronze doors, from Rome and Ravenna, but they showed no apparent interest in the mosaic decoration. In fact, the interior has a heaviness quite different from the insubstantial atmosphere of the reflected light and splendid color of Byzantine art, as seen at San Vitale. Its massive, muscular appearance is more reminiscent of Roman architecture.

C. Another striking aspect of the Carolingian artistic revival is its persuasive recollection of the Classical style of Greco-Roman antiquity, to be seen, for example, in its illuminated manuscripts.

1. The depiction we see of *St. Matthew*, from the *Gospel Book of Charlemagne* (c. 800–810), was said to have been found in the tomb of Charlemagne in the palace chapel.
2. The significance of the painting lies in the forceful three-dimensionality of the body, as seen through the robes. The pose is derived from a Classical prototype of an *author portrait*—a painting in which a famous writer was shown seated with an open book, reading or writing—but what impresses us is the degree to which the Carolingian artist understood how to recreate a believable, solid human body.
3. The artist does not make any attempt to suggest space beyond that occupied by the body—the background is basically flat bands of color.
4. Even more interesting is another illuminated *St. Matthew*, this one from the *Gospel Book of Archbishop Ebbo of Reims* (c. 816–835), commonly called the *Épernay Gospel*.
5. This painting represents the mature and distinctive Carolingian figure style, one that is suffused with linear movement and physical intensity. It has an expressive urgency that often recurs through later centuries of northern European art.
6. Note also the angel who served as St. Matthew's inspiration in the top right corner.

IV. In 813, Charlemagne selected one of his sons, Louis the Pious, to share his power and to succeed him. Charlemagne died on January 28, 814, and when Louis died in 840, a war of succession broke out among his sons.

- A. The events of the next century—including raids by the Vikings—culminated in the creation of the Holy Roman Empire, headed first by the German king Otto I (Otto the Great), whose coronation as emperor in 962 established a political entity that endured in various permutations until the early 19th century. Crowned at Aachen, Otto and his successors of the same name thus succeeded Charlemagne in place as in power. These kings gave their name to the Ottonian period of the 10th and early 11th centuries.
- B. Artistically, the Ottonian period further developed the expressive style of the Carolingians, often in a narrative direction. Perhaps the chief monument of this style is the extraordinary set of bronze doors from the monastery at Hildesheim in northern Germany.
1. The bronze doors (completed in 1015, Abbey Church of St. Michael, Hildesheim) are among the most memorable of the many sets of bronze doors throughout the history of art, and they represent a remarkable technical achievement—they were cast in a single piece, for the first time since antiquity.
 2. The single panel representing *Adam and Eve Reproached by the Lord* demonstrates the anonymous artist's achievement. Here are Adam and Eve, after the Fall, accused, found guilty, and about to be cast out of paradise. It is the succinct embodiment of paradise lost, and it has a remarkable visual impact.
 3. Note the angle of God's body, the gathering of force, the hand pointing like a cobra; the great, empty gap; and Adam, shrinking, recoiling, shamed, but pointing past the rather barren tree to Eve, shifting the blame. She bends over still more, covers herself, and points down at the demon at her feet, who, unyielding, flames up at her. The scene is intensely dramatic and immediately understandable.
- C. Moving to the end of the 11th century, away from the Ottonian Empire, we encounter one of the masterpieces of narrative art, an enthralling embroidered history of the conquest of England by William the Conqueror in 1066.
1. Though called the Bayeux Tapestry, it is, in fact, an embroidery, nearly 225 feet long by about 20 inches high, that reads like a continuous cartoon strip. But it is narrative art of the highest order, proof that seemingly naïve art is often the subtlest, as well as the clearest, the most moving, the most delightful, and the most memorable art.
 2. The tapestry was begun just after the Battle of Hastings (October 14, 1066) and completed in time for exhibition in the nave of Bayeux Cathedral in Normandy when it was consecrated in 1077. It was subsequently stretched around the nave on feast days and special occasions. The embroidery was certainly made in England,

and it is the only great pictorial wall hanging surviving from the 11th century.

3. The tapestry was probably commissioned by Bishop Odon, half-brother of William, duke of Normandy, who accompanied him during the conquest and who rebuilt the Cathedral of Bayeux. It is a statement about the need to respect an oath. Harold the Saxon had sworn an oath over sacred relics in the old Cathedral of Bayeux, recognizing William's right to the English throne after the death of King Edward. He broke his oath, taking the crown for himself. The invasion followed.
4. The first scene we see is opposite Mont Saint Michel in Normandy, with horses sinking into quicksand. After Harold breaks his oath to William, something ominous occurs. Astrologers announce the appearance of a comet, an evil omen for Harold. This is the first recorded appearance of Halley's Comet, and it portends the invasion of England by William. Finally, we see horses upended and killed and bodies strewn in the lower margin of the tapestry.
5. The Bayeux Tapestry is one of the greatest pictorial narratives in Western European art, not because of its technical sophistication, but because—like the Hildesheim door relief—in it, all the artist's energy is focused on the most direct representation of a dramatic historical event.

Works Discussed:

A Carpet Page, from *The Lindisfarne Gospels*, c. 700, tempera on vellum, 13 ½ x 9 ¼" (34.3 x 23.5 cm), The British Museum, London, Great Britain.

Church of S. Vitale, 547, Ravenna, Italy.

The Palatine Chapel, 805, Aachen, Germany.

St. Matthew, from the *Gospel Book of Charlemagne*, c. 800–810, ink and colors on vellum, 13 x 10" (33 x 25.4 cm), Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria.

St. Matthew, from the *Gospel Book of Archbishop Ebbo of Reims (The Épernay Gospel)*, c. 816–835, ink and colors on vellum, 10 ¼ x 8 ¾" (26 x 22.2 cm), Bibliothèque Municipale, Épernay, France.

Bronze Doors, completed in 1015, bronze, 16' H (4.8 m H), Church of St. Michael, Hildesheim, Germany.

Adam and Eve Reproached by the Lord, completed in 1015, bronze, 23 x 43" (58.3 x 109.3 cm), detail from the Bronze Doors, Church of St. Michael, Hildesheim, Germany.

Details from the Bayeux Tapestry, 1080, wool embroidery on linen, 20" x 225' (0.51 x 68.6 m), Centre Guillaume le Conquerant, Bayeux, France.

Further Reading:

John Beckwith, *Early Medieval Art: Carolingian, Ottonian, Romanesque*.

Lawrence Nees, *Early Medieval Art*.

Questions to Consider:

1. What function did narrative art serve, whether religious or secular, in the early Middle Ages?
2. What similarities and differences can you identify in the architecture and decoration of the Byzantine Church of S. Vitale and Charlemagne's Palatine Chapel?

Lecture Three

Romanesque Sculpture and Architecture

Scope: In this lecture, we consider the origins and characteristics of the Romanesque style and look at several examples in various art forms. By exploring the historical and cultural background of this period, we uncover the many influences on Romanesque art. Roman architecture greatly influenced this style, with its arches, stone sculptures, and massive structures, as we will see in the churches of St. Etienne and St. Trophême. We will also discuss other works, including the *Temptation of Eve*, the *Last Judgment*, and *Isaiah*, found in churches across France. Finally, we look at the importance of the pilgrimage roads and their influence on the quantity and location of Romanesque-style churches throughout southern France.

Outline

- I. The church of St. Etienne is located in Caen, France about 25 miles from Bayeux in Normandy. Construction of this church began in 1067, and the vaulting in the nave dates to 1115–1120. This structure was built by William the Conqueror as an abbey church and was known as the “abbey of the men”—a place for monks.
 - A. The Normans who conquered England introduced a well-developed architectural style that is referred to as *Norman* in England, but we call this style *Romanesque*. The building techniques were derived from ancient Roman architecture, especially the use of the *arch*, an invention that allowed Roman architects to span wide spaces with fewer supports and that instilled a fluid feeling in the space. When the arch was used to construct domes, the spatial expansion was dramatic, allowing more light into the structure.
 - B. Looking at St. Etienne, we see the nave from the front to the apse. We see the nave arcade (a series of arches on both sides of the nave), the gallery, clerestory windows, and the vaulting system with weight-bearing ribs. Most of the weight of the structure is carried by the arches.
 - C. As demonstrated by St. Etienne's façade, Romanesque architecture is typically massive, with broad expanses of exterior wall and heavy supports to buttress them. These buttressing elements are placed directly against the wall to be supported, jut out prominently, and are called *salient buttresses*. St. Etienne's enormous, symmetrical towers are another remarkable aspect of this church. Historically, towers express power, as do the ones that guard the door at St. Etienne.
 - D. The Romanesque style arose at a turning point in Western political history, when empires that Charlemagne and Otto the Great had forged

were gradually being replaced with an emerging sense of Europe as Europe. Although the Roman Catholic Church remained powerful, another rising force was *feudalism*, an economic system that allowed peasants to use land owned by lords in exchange for service, often military. The lords owed allegiance to the kings, but their own growing power gave them increasing independence.

- E. The Romanesque style, with distinct local variations, is found throughout Europe from about the middle of the 11th century until about the last third of the 12th century. Although this style is derived from architectural innovations of the period, the term also applies to sculpture, painting, and other art forms.
- II. St. Troph  me is located in Arles in southern France and was built in 1180. Because the Romans were once prominent in this region, there were many Roman ruins left for medieval architects and artists to emulate.
- A. St. Troph  me's fa  ade contains obvious Roman elements, such as arches and high-relief figure sculptures similar to those on Roman tombs.
 - B. The appearance of monumental stone sculpture, usually incorporated into architecture, distinguishes Romanesque art. (There was no precedent for this in Carolingian or Ottonian art.)
- III. We see a *Map of the Pilgrimage Roads* that dates back to 1648 and shows pilgrimage routes followed by Christians converging on holy places.
- A. Pilgrimage routes were linked to the Crusades, wars waged by European armies to capture the Holy Land from the Muslims. The Crusades inevitably resulted in territorial conquests and affected trade and economics.
 - 1. Jerusalem was retaken in the First Crusade (1099) and became a pilgrimage goal. To reach Jerusalem, northern Europeans traveled to the Mediterranean, usually by land routes, then sailed for the Near East.
 - 2. Rome was another pilgrimage goal, to which pilgrims generally traveled by land, crossing the Alps.
 - B. The most important pilgrimage site in the 11th and 12th centuries was Santiago da Compostela in the northwest corner of Spain. This spot was dedicated to St. James the Greater (or Major), the apostle whose martyred body, according to legend, came to Spain in a boat without sails, landing at Compostela, where he was buried and where a cathedral was subsequently constructed. Another legend recounted James's miraculous appearance in the early 10th century as a warrior who repelled the Moorish army's advance through Spain.
 - 1. There were four major pilgrimage roads to Santiago: one began in Paris, another in Burgundy at V  zelay, another in southwestern France at Le Puy, and yet another in Arles near Provence.

- 2. Because the pilgrims required food, lodging, and care on their long journeys, numerous churches and monasteries were built along the way. These establishments provided physical and spiritual necessities—for a price—and local towns benefited from the tourism.
- 3. The cult of relics—bones of saints and other personal effects—grew during this period because relics gave churches special attractions.

C. This brief background of pilgrimage routes helps explain the presence of Romanesque-period churches scattered throughout France.

IV. The city of Autun, in eastern France, boasts one of the most important Romanesque churches, Saint-Lazare (St. Lazarus). This church contains many relief sculptures, all carved from 1120–1130.

- A. The tympanum (lunette above the lintel of the doorway) contains the *Last Judgment*. This sculpture is signed "Gislebertus"—one of the rare artists of the Middle Ages who is known to us by name.
- B. *Hanging of Judas*, in the nave, depicts Judas being assisted in his suicide by two demons. These figures have many expressive features.
- C. *Annunciation to the Magi* depicts an angel appearing to the magi, telling them to follow the star.
- D. *Temptation of Eve* is a fragment of a relief sculpture. It was formerly on the lintel of a flanking door, between Adam and the tempter, and it is now in the Mus  e Rolin in Autun.

V. Conques is a town on a pilgrimage route between Le Puy and Moissac, on the way to Toulouse. The town contains a church dedicated to a child saint, a small girl martyred at an unknown date. Her name is St. Foi—*foi* means "faith"—and she was much venerated in England and France, although her legend is possibly unhistorical.

- A. This church contains the *Last Judgment* (c. 1130, tympanum, portal), depicting Christ with the blessed and damned.
- B. Christ is in the middle with the blessed to his right and the damned to his left. St. Foi is depicted in the corner as a child saint who is blessed by the hand of God.
- C. Several figures are shown, including one who may be St. Peter, welcoming the righteous into heaven, as well as Abraham, the patriarch. A knight, representing pride, is depicted on the side of the damned.
- D. We see two doors; through one, the blessed are welcomed into heaven, while the damned are pushed into hell through the other.

VI. In Souillac, not far from Conques, another church offers one of the most dramatic Romanesque sculptures—*Isaiah*—in the church of St. Mary.

- A. This sculpture was originally on the front of the church but was moved inside from the jamb of the old west portal. It dates from the first third of the 12th century.
- B. The prophet Isaiah, who was believed to have prophesied the birth of Christ, holds a vertical scroll that once had the words of his prophecy painted on it. The drama here is in the twisting posture of Isaiah, his left leg swung around in front of the right and his head turning back to gaze at us. Note his long, agitated beard and the counter-curves of the broad edges of his sweeping robe. In this carving, some have called him the “dancing prophet.”

VII. Less than 100 miles from Paris, the abbey at Vézelay was founded in Carolingian times but gained its first distinction during the 11th century when the supposed relics of St. Mary Magdalen were brought there, making it an important pilgrimage site.

- A. We will look at the nave in Vézelay, Ste. Madeleine (c. 1120–1132). The abbey’s greatest historical fame is connected to the Crusades. It was here, in 1146, that the great Cistercian abbot St. Bernard of Clairvaux preached the sermon that launched the Second Crusade.
- B. Although we are looking at the nave as the example, it is important to note that the throng of barons and clergy from all over Europe who gathered at Vézelay was so enormous that the event took place outside the walls of the city.
- C. Although the Second Crusade was a disaster, Vézelay remained one of the major starting points of the pilgrimage roads. In 1190, Philip Augustus, king of France, and Richard the Lion-Hearted met here to set aside their differences and unite on the Third Crusade.
- D. In 1120, on the eve of the July pilgrimage, the church at Vézelay was destroyed in a tragic fire that claimed 1,000 lives. This tragedy reminds us of the great numbers of pilgrims who set out from there and other starting points on the pilgrimage roads.
- E. The rebuilding of the church began immediately, and the nave was complete by 1132. In this handsome nave are famous *historiated capitals*—capitals with sculpted scenes.
 - 1. Our example shows *Noah Building the Ark* (c. 1120–1132, Vézelay, Ste. Madeleine, nave, capital). The most famous sculptural monument at Vézelay is in the narthex, which was built to a larger scale to accommodate crowds entering the church.
 - 2. The portal of the *Mission of the Apostles* (c. 1120–1132, Vézelay, narthex) is our next example. In this façade within a façade, a door opens into the nave, and above that door is the tympanum with the *Mission of the Apostles*.
 - 3. Many of the principal Romanesque tympanum sculptures depict the Last Judgment. The highly original subject of the Vézelay

tympanum, *Mission of the Apostles*, reflects the church’s fame as a starting point for pilgrims.

- a. The subject is from the Acts of the Apostles in the New Testament, which recounts that Jesus “showed himself alive after his passion” and instructed the apostles to be witnesses to him “unto the uttermost ends of the earth... And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.”
- b. The cloud is shown by the sculptor, and the figure of Jesus is assumed into heaven surrounded by a *mandorla*, an almond-shaped halo that indicates his ascension and the emanation of sacred light. The apostles flank him.
- c. This central subject has a distinctive and expressive design. The figures, especially of Jesus, are flattened into a high relief rather than sculpted in the round. Their poses are angular, and their clothing is incised with sharp, moving lines that serve as indicators of spiritual emotion. From Christ’s hands, rays of the Holy Spirit descend onto the heads of the apostles. Each of them holds a copy of the Gospel.
- d. Especially noteworthy are the small compartments within the arch and the lintel, which are occupied by a myriad of striking figures representing the people to whom the apostles will bear the Gospel. These figures are based on the imaginative descriptions of travelers to distant lands. For instance, in the compartment just to the right of Christ’s head are the “pig-snouted Ethiopians” described in one pilgrim’s report.

- F. Vézelay is one of the finest monuments in the Romanesque style, and it leaves us on the threshold of the next moment in medieval culture: the Gothic.

Works Discussed:

St. Etienne, begun c. 1067, Caen, France.

St. Trophime, c. 1180, Arles, France.

Map of the Pilgrimage Roads, c. 1648.

Gislebertus:

Last Judgment, c. 1120–30, from the tympanum of the Cathedral of St. Lazare, Autun, France.

Hanging of Judas and Annunciation to the Magi, c. 1120–30, capitals in the Cathedral of St. Lazare, Autun, France.

Temptation of Eve, c. 1120–30, fragment relief sculpture from the Cathedral of St. Lazare, Musée Rolin, Autun, France.

Last Judgment, c. 1130, from the tympanum of the portal, Church of St. Foy, Conques, France.

Prophet Isaiah, c. 12th century, Church of St. Mary, Souillac, France.

Ste. Madeleine, c. 1120–32, Vézelay, France.

Noah Building the Ark, c. 1120–32, a capital in the nave from the Church of Ste. Madeleine, Vézelay, France.

Mission of the Apostles, c. 1120–32, Church of Ste. Madeleine, Vézelay, France.

Further Reading:

Ulrike Laule, Uwe Geese, and Rolf Toman, eds., *Romanesque Art*.

Andreas Petzold, *Romanesque Art (Perspectives)*.

Questions to Consider:

1. What were the primary cultural, political, and historical influences on Romanesque art forms?
2. Identify the various parts of Romanesque churches and describe their primary functions.

Lecture Four Gothic Art in France

Scope: In this lecture, we look first at the evolution of the Gothic style, including the origins of the word and the style's architectural characteristics. Next, we discuss some primary examples of this style, including Notre-Dame of Paris, Chartres Cathedral, Rouen Cathedral, and Saint-Maclou. The emergence of the Flamboyant Gothic style can be seen in the latter two examples. Looking closely at both the façades and naves of Notre-Dame of Paris and Chartres Cathedral, we will note the specific architectural elements of Notre-Dame and study the sculptural doorjamb figures at Chartres.

Outline

- I. The term *Gothic* is well known and often used as a catch-all category for the style of the later Middle Ages; few know that the term was coined as a slur by Italian writers of the Renaissance. To them, the foreign style was in such conflict with the Humanistic principles of their art in the 15th and 16th centuries that it seemed like another invasion of the *Goths*, the barbarians who had raided Italy and precipitated the fall of the Roman Empire.
- II. Architecturally, the Gothic style evolved from the Romanesque, and one of the key transitional monuments is the famous cathedral of Notre-Dame in Paris. *Notre Dame* means "Our Lady," that is, the Virgin Mary.
 - A. Our example shows the Notre-Dame of Paris façade (c. 1163–1250.)
 1. This ensemble view is rare among such renowned buildings because they are often hemmed in by later urban environments. Because the cathedral sits on an island, Notre-Dame offers this sweeping view from the south bank of the Seine.
 2. The Notre-Dame façade shows the symmetrical harmony of the square towers and reminds us of the façade of St. Etienne at Caen. The St. Etienne façade is mostly solid masonry with relatively small doors and windows punched through it, whereas the Notre-Dame façade has been opened up by three deep portals, a huge rose window, carved lace-like gables above the portals, and a gallery of sculptured figures below the rose window. The remarkable opening of the architectural elements gives the façade a comparatively lighter appearance.
 3. Another feature of the Notre-Dame façade is its clarity and lucidity in architectural parts, symmetry, and proportion.
 - B. We now turn to the nave of Notre-Dame.
 1. It would not have been possible to penetrate so much of the façade if the front and the lateral walls of the cathedral had to support all

the weight of the stone vaults. The weight of the vaulting of a great church is immense and pushes the walls outward. Thus, in Romanesque churches, walls needed additional thickening—salient buttresses—to contain the pressures.

2. Apparent from a view of the nave, much of the upper wall, the third or *clerestory* level, has been replaced by enormous glass windows that allow light into the sanctuary. The weight of the vaults has been countered by the stone ribs that carry most of the weight and pass some of it down to the piers between the windows and the floor. The webbing between the ribs is essentially non-supporting and constructed of lighter materials.
 3. The greatest remaining concentration of weight is at the convergence of the ribs at the tops of the piers, and much of that is carried away from the wall by the *flying buttresses*—one of the most famous architectural inventions of the Gothic era.
 4. As we see, the vaults are divided into six parts. As Gothic architecture advanced, only four parts were used instead of six.
 5. The arches also have changed, both in the nave arcade and in the vaults, taking on a pointed rather than a round profile. This directs the thrust of the weight vertically downward and decreases the pressure at the haunch of the arch (the most vulnerable spot of maximum outward thrust). Moreover, the pointed arch increases the height of the arch and the whole church, emphasizing the soaring quality associated with the Gothic style.
- C. On Notre-Dame's exterior, near the apse, the flying buttresses consist of a lower buttress and a higher strut. This construction means that the thickness of the walls can be reduced, because the weight is being carried out and down on great piers that are some distance from the exterior of the church, not just down through the wall. This allows the walls to be opened up with windows that let in more light.
- D. Notre-Dame's vast interior is a useful introduction to describe another great church, the Royal Abbey Church of St. Denis, also in Paris.
1. About 20 to 25 years before construction began on Notre-Dame, the Abbot Suger of St. Denis wrote extensive descriptions of the rebuilding of the narthex and choir of his church in a new style. In re-consecrating his church, Suger wrote verses that manifested his pleasure in the light that now filled the building: "The church shines with its middle part brightened./ . . ./And bright is the noble edifice which is pervaded by the new light."
 2. Suger also gave a detailed description of what it was like when the church was filled to capacity, particularly on feast days. Excessive crowding on holy days was one reason for his determination to enlarge the narthex.

III. We now look at Chartres Cathedral (c. 1134–1194), as seen across the rooftops of the city.

- A. About 100 miles southwest of Paris, Chartres is the first masterpiece in the full Gothic style. This is due in part to disaster—the destruction of the recently rebuilt cathedral in 1194. The archbishop of Chartres, a friend of Abbot Suger, had undertaken a rebuilding in the spirit of St. Denis around 1145, but everything except the west façade and its sculpture was destroyed by fire. Rebuilding began immediately and was finished by 1220, a remarkably short time in this era.
- B. Viewing the Chartres nave, we see a taller, narrower nave arcade, a much reduced gallery level with a triple arcade (*triforium*), and the clerestory with still more glass. This nave has superior unity.
 1. Photos cannot do justice to the quality of light in the church. Unlike other great cathedrals, Chartres retains nearly all of its original 13th-century stained glass, and the effect is a magical display of colored light.
 2. The famous window *Notre Dame de la Belle Verriere* (*Our Lady of the Beautiful Wall of Glass*) in the ambulatory near the south transept shows this effect. Note the blues, grays, and reds of the Madonna and Christ Child. Henry Adams wrote in his book *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres*, "a strange, almost uncanny feeling seems to haunt this window. . . . The effect of the whole...is deep and sad."
- C. Next, we will consider the west façade of Chartres. The lower part of this façade survived the fire of 1194, and its two towers, begun before 1145, were completed at different dates and in different styles. Chartres' earliest sculpture decorates the portals of the west façade.
 1. An example of this sculpture is the doorjamb figures from the central door (c. 1150). The jamb statues of all three west doors represent biblical prophets, kings, and queens and emphasize the harmony of secular and sacred rule by suggesting that the kings and queens of France were spiritual heirs of the biblical rulers. This idea haunted many cathedrals in France during the French Revolution, when biblical king sculptures were mutilated and destroyed because they were associated with political rulers. St. Denis and Notre-Dame of Paris especially suffered important losses.
 2. These figures have charm as well as dignity, and though they are attached to the columns and echo the columnar shape, they are essentially conceived as sculpture in the round.
 3. The style of the 13th-century sculpture at Chartres is early High Gothic, representing a suave and more convincing figure type.
 4. The figures from the left jamb of the central portal of the north transept (after 1194) are Old Testament precursors of Christ.

- a. For example, the center figure, Moses, holds the tablets of the Ten Commandments and a column with the brazen serpent (which was later interpreted as a symbol of the Crucifixion). He stands on the golden calf idol that the Israelites were worshiping when Moses came down from the mountain. His body turns slightly on its axis, and his clothes fall naturally with a certain flexibility. This is much different than the columnar stiffness and vertical drapery folds of the figures on the west front.
- b. To the left of Moses is a portrayal of Abraham and Isaac when Abraham is about to sacrifice his son in obedience to God's command. Isaac's hands are bound; Abraham's left hand cradles his son's head while his right hand holds the knife. The most unusual aspect, in the context of Gothic portal sculpture, is that Abraham looks up abruptly, with a surprising degree of movement. He is looking at the angel who has arrived to stop the sacrifice, and beneath the feet of Abraham and Isaac is the ram that becomes the alternative sacrifice.

IV. Next, we will consider two architectural monuments in the city of Rouen in Normandy on the Seine.

- A. The first monument is the Rouen Cathedral (Notre Dame), recorded in a 19th-century image by a little-known artist. This is an interesting example because the artist was able to free himself from the confines of the square in front of the cathedral and show the church much more fully than a photograph could.
 1. Only the three lowest tiers of the northwest (left) tower—the St. Romain Tower—remain of the Romanesque church consecrated in 1063; the rest burned in a fire in 1200. From that point, four centuries of Gothic style can be seen on this same spot, dominated by the so-called *Flamboyant* style of the 16th century. The soaring steeple is a 19th-century ironwork creation—at 151 meters (500 feet) it is the tallest spire in France.
 2. The façade of Rouen Cathedral became the subject of some 30 paintings by Claude Monet in the 1890s. One example is *Rouen Cathedral* painted in 1894. Note how Monet captured the many colors and the reflections of white light in his painting.
- B. In the very late Gothic period in northern Europe, which corresponded with the Renaissance in Italy, architecture developed in a striking way. Curvilinear forms, S-shaped or flame-shaped, entered the decorative repertory of architecture, both sacred and secular.
 1. From the flame shape, the word *flamboyant* was derived. *Flamma* is Latin for “flame,” and *flambeau* is French for “torch.” The word *flamboyant* is purely descriptive and carries none of the negative connotations that it may have in English.

2. It was perhaps predictable that this expressive, curvilinear style should develop; the ever-increasing piercing of the non-supporting decorative stone work must have tempted the designers and the carvers to relax, extend, and elaborate their forms, as the sculptors of saints and Last Judgments were doing.
- C. St. Maclou (c. 1500–1514) is a church near Rouen Cathedral and a famous example of the French Flamboyant style. Sadly, it was bombarded and nearly destroyed in the battle for the bridges over the Seine during World War II. Note the remarkable virtuosity of the carving of the gables above the portals on the church's façade—they are the visual definition of the Flamboyant Gothic.

Works Discussed:

Cathedral of Notre-Dame of Paris, 1163–1250, Paris, France.

Chartres Cathedral, 1134–94, Chartres, France.

Notre Dame de la Belle Verriere (Our Lady of the Beautiful Wall of Glass), 1134–94, Chartres Cathedral, Chartres, France.

Jamb figures from central door, c. 1150, Chartres Cathedral, Chartres, France.

Moses and Abraham and Isaac from the left jamb of the central portal of the North Transept, after 1194, Chartres Cathedral, Chartres, France.

Church of St. Maclou, c. 1500–14, Rouen, France.

Rouargue:

Rouen Cathedral (Notre Dame), 19th century, engraving, Bibliothèque des Arts Décoratifs, Paris, France.

Claude Monet:

Rouen Cathedral, 1894, oil on canvas, 42 x 28 ¾" (107 x 73 cm), Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France.

Further Reading:

Herve Kergall and Viviane Minne-Seve, *Romanesque and Gothic France: Art and Architecture*.

Whitney S. Stoddard, *Art and Architecture in Medieval France*.

Questions to Consider:

1. What architectural inventions does the Gothic style employ that give it a distinctive appearance?
2. How can you account for different styles or lack of symmetry in a single structure?

Lecture Five

Gothic Art in Germany and Italy

Scope: In this lecture, we continue our study of Gothic art forms and styles. Beginning with France, we study a famous sculpture in the Strasbourg Cathedral before moving on to other works of art in Italy. In Pisa, we find extensive examples of the Gothic style, including relief carvings by Nicola Pisano and his son, Giovanni. Once again, we consider the Roman influences on these works, including inspiration gained from sarcophagi. Finally, we compare and contrast three paintings about the same subject, the Madonna enthroned with the Christ Child, by three different artists, today in the Uffizi Gallery in Florence.

Outline

- I. Thus far, we have looked at medieval art—Romanesque and Gothic—within the borders of modern France. But these stylistic or cultural labels transcend borders, especially given that we are not speaking of modern nation-states.
- II. The city of Strasbourg, on the Rhine River, has changed political complexion more than once, and it would be foolish to say that Strasbourg was not French in the Middle Ages.
 - A. Our example shows a famous sculpture, *Death of the Virgin* (c. 1230, Strasbourg Cathedral, south transept door, tympanum).
 - B. This small narrative sculpture has a characteristic expressivity that is not explained simply by its date in the Gothic period. The heads of the apostles, who are present at Mary's death, are compressed awkwardly against the arch. The central drama is richly enacted by four full-length and two half-length figures: Mary, being laid on a bed by two apostles; Christ and St. John standing behind the bed; and most remarkably, St. Mary Magdalen, kneeling in front of it.
 - C. The robes of these figures are modeled in a Classical manner reminiscent of the flowing robes of Moses and Abraham on the north portal of Chartres, but they are infused with more humanity and tenderness, because their greater *motion* is translated into *emotion*.
 - D. The sculptor makes the demands of the semi-circular composition work for him by allowing it to bend figures in toward the emotional core of the scene. Note that Christ, miraculously present, holds a female figure like a small statue in his left hand. This is the soul of his mother, which he receives. The Magdalene, who nearly always expresses deep emotion in artistic representations, is believable in her grief, which we see in her face and feel in her coiled posture.

- III. The next work is in the Germanic spirit—a creation of a northern psychological trait that values the release of extreme emotion and permits it to govern the representation of the human body.
 - A. *Pietà* (c. 1300) shows the emaciated and broken body of Christ supported by his anguished mother.
 - B. The compactness of this group was partly dictated by the limitations of the wood, but it is precisely this compression of form, contrasted with disproportionately large, expressive heads, that engages our emotions.
 - C. Curiously, this scene has no scriptural foundation. It was invented, probably in northern Europe, as a kind of omega to the alpha of the innumerable images of the Madonna tenderly holding the Christ Child.
- IV. South of the Alps, in Italy, the Romanesque and Gothic styles also found a home before a rejection of these styles developed during the Renaissance. One of the most beautiful and monumental architectural complexes in Italy is in Pisa, then a rich port city on the Arno near the Tyrrhenian Sea.
 - A. Our next example shows an aerial view of the baptistery, cathedral, *campanile*, and *campo santo* at Pisa. All these buildings were constructed from 1053–1272.
 1. The tiers of white stone arcades and colonnades on the principal buildings are breathtaking. The baptistery in the foreground suggests a papal tiara.
 2. The *campo santo*, or “holy field,” just beyond the baptistery, is the burial ground, a large, open, cloister-like space surrounded by covered galleries that are decorated with tombs and wall paintings.
 3. The whole of this complex is known by the evocative name Campo dei Miracoli, meaning “Field of Miracles.”
 - B. Inside the baptistery is a magnificent pulpit (c. 1260, Baptistery, Pisa, pulpit) carved by Nicola Pisano (1220–1278). Nicola consciously reinvented Roman Classical forms for use in his religious sculpture.
 1. There are five rectangular marble panels with relief carvings on the pulpit. One of the most striking of the marble panels is the *Adoration of the Magi*. All the figures in this carving impress us with their dignity and physical weight.
 2. The drapery owes much to Roman marble carving, except that its sharp angularity is similar to Italo-Byzantine stylization. Note the horses of the magi, the gifts in containers, and the Christ Child's acceptance of the gift.
 3. Nicola borrowed the Madonna's pose from a Roman sarcophagus then, and still, in the Campo Santo at Pisa (a museum of Roman sarcophagi). Nicola used a sarcophagus with the legend of Hippolytus for inspiration here.

- C. We see the sarcophagus (2nd c. A.D.) depicting the myth of Hippolytus, whose death was caused by Poseidon. The theme was popular on Roman sarcophagi.
1. The female figure seated at the left front of this sarcophagus is Phaedra; Theseus is the older man near her; and Hippolytus is in the center. The right half of the relief shows the horse of Hippolytus bolting when the sea monster sent by Poseidon appears.
 2. Nicola reversed the seated Phaedra when he adopted the pose for his Madonna, perhaps to disguise the borrowing but just as likely for compositional reasons. He also borrowed the triangular gable or cornice above her head.
- D. At the six corners of the pulpit, above the capitals of the supporting columns, are small statues of the Virtues, as well as John the Baptist.
1. Our example shows the figure titled *Fortitude*, one of the so-called Cardinal Virtues, symbolizing strength, courage, and endurance. Nicola based him on the popular mythological hero Hercules.
 2. The nudity is perhaps surprising at such an early, pre-Renaissance date but is more common than one might think. This model was probably also on a sarcophagus.
- E. Next, we consider Nicola's *The Nativity* from the Pisa pulpit. This also is reminiscent of a Roman sarcophagus relief. The majesty of the reclining Mary, presiding like a queen, is unforgettable.
1. Note that here the Nativity is combined with the Annunciation. To the left of the reclining Mary is the annunciate Mary and the Angel Gabriel. The reclining Mary overlaps herself in the Annunciation.
 2. In the foreground, the midwives wash the child while Joseph watches; behind the birth bed, the infant is already laid in the manger, while the shepherds receive news of his birth. These multiple simultaneous narratives are a standard pictorial device in medieval art and continue well into the Renaissance.
- F. Nicola Pisano had a son, Giovanni (1248–after 1314), who shared his genius in sculpture (both were architects, as well, for example, working on the Pisa baptistery). Both belong to the Gothic era, but Nicola's Classicism is in striking contrast to his son's art.
- G. Giovanni also worked in Pisa, creating a great pulpit for the cathedral. Consider *The Nativity* (c. 1302–1311).
1. The scene still contains multiple simultaneous narratives, but there are many differences between Giovanni's design and Nicola's. Although the Virgin is hieratically large, her dominance is not as striking, and our eyes are drawn to her because of the sloping, eye-shaped oval that contains her body. The lower part of that shape is marked by the curve of her bedclothes; then the eye is drawn upward at the left by the curve of her back and head and by the beginning of a grotto-like arc that envelopes Mary, the ox and ass, and her child, to whom she pays tender attention.
 2. The overall design is dynamic, with a swaying, swinging line; bowing, stooping, and bending figures; and a scheme of figures radiating outward from a point in the lower center of the panel.
- V. Both Pisanos also worked in Siena, in the striking black-and-white marble cathedral shown as our next example.
- A. This cathedral (mid-12th to late 14th c., Siena) has been much altered inside. Long removed from its place of honor as the high altarpiece is one of the greatest medieval Italian painted altars, the *Maestà*.
 - B. The *Maestà* ("Majesty") (c. 1308–1311, front side, with enthroned Madonna) is by Duccio di Buoninsegna. We will return to this masterpiece later in our lectures.
- VI. We will look at three great paintings of a single subject, the Madonna and Child enthroned with angels, by different artists during a brief period of 25 to 30 years.
- A. The artists are Cimabue, Duccio, and Giotto. The monumental paintings are today all in a single museum, the Uffizi in Florence.
 - B. First, we will look at Cimabue's *Madonna Enthroned (Santa Trinità)* (c. 1280–1290).
 1. Cimabue's monumental Madonna is the stylistic heir to the ongoing Byzantine tradition—the style of the Eastern Catholic Church, centered in Constantinople. In the poses, symmetry, and decorative details, it speaks the language of what contemporary Florentines called the "Greek manner."
 2. No panel painting in the East had dared such a huge size and rarely had they achieved such formal simplicity and directness, resulting in a more personal connection with the viewer.
 3. Italo-Byzantine art, this Eastern-flavored style, was dominant in Italian painting in the 12th century and most of the 13th century. Cimabue moves away from this style even while he incorporates elements of it. Even the pointed gable of the panel is a break with Byzantine art.
 4. Note the architectural throne, especially at the bottom, where the concavity of the base houses prophets. The throne emphasizes an unexpected solidity.
 5. This painting is called the *Santa Trinità Madonna* because it comes from that Florentine church.
 - C. Next, we will consider Duccio's *Madonna Enthroned* (c. 1285).
 1. Seeing it in reproduction, most people would guess that Duccio's *Madonna* was smaller than Cimabue's, but in fact, it is larger. The difference in style might lead to such a mistake, because Duccio is a far more lyrical painter, and that lyricism is expressed through

smaller figures, more linear curves, fewer massive shapes, and gentle expressions.

2. Comparatively, we see that Cimabue's eight standing angels are densely packed in a cascade of wings, while Duccio's four angels seem to float. Cimabue's angels look directly at us, and Duccio's look at the Madonna and Christ Child. Further, Duccio's throne is placed on a slight diagonal, while Cimabue's is insistently frontal.
 3. In art historical literature, Duccio's painting is often mistakenly called the "*Rucellai Madonna*," but that is only because it was later moved into the chapel of the Rucellai family in Sta. Maria Novella in Florence—the family did not commission the painting.
- D. The third painting is Giotto's *Madonna Enthroned (Ognissanti Madonna)* (c. 1310).
1. From the church of the Ognissanti (All Saints) in Florence, this great painting of the Madonna and Christ Child represents the greatest stylistic advance but is the smallest of the three. By "advance," I do not mean improved or better; I refer only to the technical advances made by Giotto that are found here.
 2. First, the architecture of the throne wraps around, enclosing the Madonna and Christ Child. Second, her head is held erect and is, therefore, less stylized; we feel that she is looking at us with a shared humanity. Third, the angels and saints that flank the throne, while crowded, overlap with greater naturalness and more variety. The two angels who kneel beside the front steps of the throne possess a noble bearing that is absent in the otherwise superb angels of Cimabue and Duccio.

Works Discussed:

Death of the Virgin, c. 1230, tympanum of the south transept door, Strasbourg Cathedral, Strasbourg, France.

Baptistery, Cathedral, Campanile, and Camposanto, 1053–1272, Pisa, Italy.

Roettgen Pietà, c. 1300, wood, 34 ½" H (87.5 cm H), Rheinisches Landesmuseum, Bonn, Germany.

Roman sarcophagus showing *The Legend of Hippolytus*, 2nd century A.D., Camposanto, Pisa, Italy.

Nicola Pisano:

Adoration of the Magi, *Fortitude (Allegory of Strength)*, and *The Nativity*, 1260, marble, 15' H (4.6 m H), details from the Pulpit, Baptistery, Pisa, Italy.

Giovanni Pisano:

The Nativity, c. 1302–11, marble, from the Pulpit, Duomo, Pisa, Italy.

Duccio di Buoninsegna:

Maestà, 1308–11, tempera and gold leaf on panel, originally about 7' x 13' 6", Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Metropolitana, Siena, Italy.

Madonna Enthroned, c. 1285, tempera on panel, 14' 9" x 9' 6" (4.5 x 2.9 m), Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy.

Cimabue:

Madonna Enthroned (of Sta. Trinità), c. 1280, tempera on panel, 12' 7" x 7' 4" (3.9 x 2.2 m), Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy.

Giotto:

Madonna Enthroned (Ognissanti Madonna), c. 1310, tempera on panel, 10' 8" x 6' 8" (3.3 x 2 m), Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy.

Further Reading:

Robert A. Scott, *The Gothic Enterprise: A Guide to Understanding the Medieval Cathedral*.

John White, *Art and Architecture in Italy, 1250–1400*.

Questions to Consider:

1. What influences are revealed in Nicola Pisano's sculpture and architecture?
2. Compare and contrast the three paintings depicting the Madonna and Child enthroned. In your opinion, which is the most realistic? Most impressive? Most emotional?

Lecture Six

Giotto and the Arena Chapel—Part I

Scope: This lecture and the following one discuss the achievements of Giotto, who painted one of the depictions of the Madonna and Child enthroned that we considered in our last lecture. Giotto was commissioned by the Scrovegni family to fresco the interior of the family chapel. We will discuss the history of the Arena Chapel, including its location, its patron, and its significance. After describing the technique of fresco, we will study several scenes from Giotto's fresco cycle narrating the life of the Virgin and the life of Christ.

Outline

- I. The Scrovegni Chapel (c. 1303), in Padua near Italy's coast, is called the Arena Chapel because it was built along with a palace for the Scrovegni family on the site of an ancient Roman amphitheater. The photo we see is of the chapel, because the palace no longer exists. A simple structure, the chapel's solid, austere exterior gives no hint of the treasure that lies within.
 - A. One of the supreme achievements of Western European art can be seen on the walls of the interior of the Arena Chapel, a fresco cycle of 38 large narrative scenes and a huge Last Judgment on the entrance wall of the chapel. The subjects of the wall paintings are the life of the Virgin Mary and Jesus' life, death (passion), and resurrection. All the painting is the work of Giotto di Bondone (1266/67–1337), an artist from Tuscany who had already made a name for himself painting at the shrine of St. Francis at Assisi.
 - B. Although it is possible that Giotto worked here until 1310 to complete his cycle, some scholars suggest a remarkably short span of about two years, so that the frescoes would have been complete by 1305 when the chapel was consecrated. But whether it took two years or seven years, the Arena Chapel is a work for eternity.
- II. In order to see the whole picture, we must first discuss the history of the chapel, its artist, Giotto, and the medium of *fresco*.
 - A. Enrico Scrovegni's father, Rinaldo (d. 1289), was a wealthy and notorious citizen of Padua. His wealth and notoriety came from money lending at usurious rates. So widely despised was Rinaldo that Dante, whose *Divine Comedy* was begun in 1307, made a place for him in the seventh circle of hell, reserved for usurers. Enrico Scrovegni himself was also probably a usurer, and he may have commissioned this chapel to redeem the family reputation and, perhaps, their souls.
 - B. Giotto (according to Giorgio Vasari in his seminal Renaissance work on the *Lives of the Artists*) was the pupil of Cimabue, though this account

may simply reflect their stylistic kinship. Already in his late 30s when he came to Padua, Giotto had established a considerable reputation, with important works in the fresco cycle at the shrine of St. Francis at Assisi, the saint's birthplace, and an enormous crucifix for the Florentine church of Santa Maria Novella, among others. He also had worked in Rome.

- C. Fresco was the principal medium for painting on walls during the Renaissance in Italy and for a long time thereafter. The Italian word *fresco* means "fresh"—frescoes are painted in water-based colors onto a wet plaster wall.
 1. If painted on top of dry plaster, the result is called *fresco a secco* ("dry fresco"); if painted on a thin layer of wet plaster laid onto the dry wall, the colors are infused into the plaster, and the result is *buon fresco* ("true fresco"), one of the most permanent painting techniques. Dry fresco is usually reserved for finishing details or used with expensive pigments and is more fragile and subject to damage.
 2. Because the painting of an area of wet plaster must stop when the plaster dries, the medium requires speed and confidence. It is difficult to match one day's work with the preceding day's work, so a discrete area of color—a figure, for instance—is best painted at one time. After the passage of time, the sections may be distinguished easily. In Italian, such a section is called a *giornata*, a "day's work."
 3. When frescoing a wall, the painter must start at the top and work down, or he risks dripping paint on finished work.
- III. With this background in mind, we return to Giotto's fresco in the Arena Chapel.
- A. As previously mentioned, the subjects of the fresco cycle are the life of the Virgin Mary and the life of Jesus. The subjects are ordered in three tiers. The story begins at the altar end (the far end of the chapel as shown in the photo), the top tier on the right-hand (south) wall, with scenes of Mary's parents, and continues back toward the entrance door. It then moves to the top tier on the left-hand side of the chapel and continues back to the altar wall. The last narrative scene is Mary's Wedding Procession. There are 12 scenes in all.
 - B. At the top, the arched altar wall depicts God sending the Angel Gabriel to tell Mary of the divine child she is to bear; the Annunciation flanks the arch, with the Angel Gabriel on the left and Mary on the right.
 - C. The middle tier of the right-hand wall begins at the altar end with the Nativity, the birth of Jesus, and moves through the stories of his early childhood. Then, jumping across to the north side, the narrative continues, mostly with stories of Jesus' ministry.

- D. The bottom tier on the south wall continues with the last events of Jesus' life, from the Last Supper to the Mocking of Christ, and on the opposite wall, with the Procession to Calvary and the Crucifixion, on through the events after Jesus' death, ending at the altar wall once more. The only wall that we have not mentioned or seen so far is the interior of the entrance wall, where Giotto painted the Last Judgment.

IV. For the remainder of this lecture and the next, we will look more closely at some of the most significant of these scenes in narrative order.

- A. The first reproduction contains the *Triumphal Arch with the Altar*, including the *Annunciation*, *Pact of Judas*, and *Visitation*. On the altar, we see Giovanni Pisano's *Madonna and Child* (c. 1305). This sculpture has a French flair, suggesting that Giovanni had seen French Gothic sculpture and highlighting the difference between Giovanni and his father, Nicola, who showed strong Classical tendencies.

- B. Note the following sources for the life of the Virgin and the life of Christ. Keep in mind that artists had other sources besides the Old and New Testaments to consult when elaborating their painted narratives.

1. For the legends of the Virgin Mary and her parents, see the Apocryphal Gospel of St. James the Less and the Gospel of the Pseudo-Matthew. The famous *Golden Legend* of Voragine also supplied information.
2. For most of the rest, see the Gospels of the New Testament.
3. Also see the *Meditations on the Life of Christ*, gathered together in the late 13th century by an unidentified Franciscan monk called the Pseudo-Bonaventura. This text was nearly contemporary with Giotto. The *Meditations* may have been especially appealing to Giotto because it stressed the human, vulnerable aspects of Jesus and contained many colorful anecdotes, written in a direct style.

V. Let us consider Giotto's remarkable interpretations of these stories.

- A. Joachim and Anna, the parents of Mary, had been childless and were quite elderly. Barrenness was considered a sign of God's disfavor, and Joachim had been expelled from the temple for this reason. In his absence, his worried wife received an angelic visitation.

1. The *Annunciation to St. Anne*, the third scene, shows the effective dollhouse architecture, with an open front like a stage setting. The angel can be seen coming through Anne's window. The annunciate angel tells Anne that she will conceive and bear a child to be named Mary.
2. In the open porch at the left, a young woman holds a distaff, a rod entwined with wool from which thread is spun. This domestic object has a dual significance. In Classical mythology, it is an attribute of one of the Fates and refers to the thread of destiny that is spun out. In pictures of the Annunciation, it is an attribute of the

Virgin Mary, thus it has been adopted for the less commonly represented story of the annunciation to Mary's mother.

- B. *Joachim's Sacrifice* shows the rejected Joachim, accompanied by a shepherd and a small group of animals, making a sacrifice of a sheep to God. The fire still burns, and an angel and the hand of God appear to signal acceptance of Joachim's offering. The landscape, miniature though it is, is expressive in the direct use of diagonals cutting an illusionistic shallow space into the painting. The animals are naturalistic and delightful.
- C. The *Dream of Joachim* depicts Joachim sleeping while two shepherds stand nearby. An angel appears in his dream to tell Joachim of Anne's imminent, unexpected fertility and the conception of Mary. The angel tells him to go to the Golden Gate in Jerusalem to meet his wife.
- D. In the *Meeting at the Golden Gate*, Anne and Joachim reunite and embrace, joyful in their knowledge. Note the memorable, mysterious, ominous woman in black near the gate.
- E. Next we look at *The Virgin's Suitors Presenting Their Rods*. According to the *Golden Legend*, when Mary was 14, she left the temple to receive suitors for her marriage.
 1. Because she had taken a vow of virginity, the high priest sought guidance. He heard a voice tell him that the men of marriageable age of the House of David should each bring a dry branch and lay it on the altar. The suitor whose branch, or rod, flowered would be chosen as Mary's husband.
 2. The elderly Joseph declined because of age. Here we see that he hangs back at the far left. When none of the branches flowered, the voice told the priest that the only man who had not presented his rod was the man who would become Mary's husband.
 3. Notice that all the suitors' heads are aligned in the painting, with only the priest's head slightly elevated.
- F. *The Suitors' Prayer before the Rods* shows all of the men kneeling. The heads are even more securely aligned, and they have left the strong solid wall of blue sky above them. Consider how this blue—painted with precious azurite in *fresco secco*—must have resonated when it was newly painted. Joseph still hides himself at the left edge of the picture—only his haloed head is seen. Also, note the pyramid of figures and rods and the fact that Giotto chooses not to show the flowering of Joseph's rod but, instead, this moment of suspense.
- G. *The Marriage of the Virgin* shows a standing-kneeling-standing sequence on the wall of the chapel. This is the marriage ceremony, and Joseph holds his flowering branch, upon which the Holy Spirit, in the form of a dove, perches, as the *Golden Legend* relates, "according to the prophecy of Isaiah."

1. Among the disappointed suitors, two may be noted. The man in blue nearest Joseph seems to be holding his hand up, not in greeting, but threatening to strike Joseph. Just behind him is a suitor who breaks his rod over his raised knee.
 2. This motif became firmly established in the iconography of this scene, famously used by Raphael, among others.
- H.** This scene is followed by the *Wedding Procession* (badly damaged), which concludes the early life of the Virgin.
- I.** *The Annunciation* follows and is, of course, a more famous Annunciation than the one to Mary's mother, Anne. This Annunciation doesn't have to do with barrenness but with sworn virginity and an even more miraculous conception and birth—the Incarnation of Christ at the moment of the Annunciation.
1. Although this scene is placed exactly in the narrative sequence of the chapel, it is also the scene immediately visible upon entering the chapel. As the first significant act in the Christian drama of salvation, this placement is appropriate; this chapel is the burial place of the Scrovegni family, who undoubtedly hoped for salvation.
 2. The top of the triumphal arch is occupied by God sending the Archangel Gabriel to Earth to bring the news to Mary, and the areas left and right of the arch are inhabited by Gabriel and Mary. This is an arrangement found elsewhere, and it is a brilliant conception. Each inhabits a painted architectural room, but they are both separated and united by this arch of spiritual triumph. The curve of the arch itself carries the divine message from announcer to annunciate.

VI. In our next lecture, we will continue our exploration of Giotto's Arena Chapel frescoes, this time with the life of Christ, in which Giotto's interpretations of the subjects seem to grow both more human and more spiritual.

Works Discussed:

Giovanni Pisano:

Madonna and Child, c. 1305, Scrovegni (Arena) Chapel, Padua, Italy.

Giotto:

Annunciation to St. Anne, Joachim's Sacrifice, Joachim's Dream, Meeting at the Golden Gate, The Suitors Presenting Their Rods, The Suitors' Prayer before the Rods, The Marriage of the Virgin, and *The Annunciation*, c. 1305, fresco, overall: 69' L x 26' W x 43' H, Scrovegni (Arena) Chapel, Padua, Italy.

Further Reading:

Giuseppe Basile, *Giotto: Frescoes in the Scrovegni Chapel*.

James H. Stubblebine, ed., *Giotto: The Arena Chapel Frescoes: Illustrations, Introductory Essay, Backgrounds and Sources, Criticism*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Why did Giotto use fresco in the Arena Chapel? What are the advantages and disadvantages of the medium of fresco?
2. How are the various depictions in Giotto's fresco cycle blended together but kept as distinct, separate scenes?

Lecture Seven

Giotto and the Arena Chapel—Part II

Scope: We return to the Arena Chapel to study several scenes from the life of Christ. We discuss Giotto's powerful renditions of popular Christian subjects by describing specific details of the narrative. We also return briefly to Mary and Joseph's story but emphasize scenes that represent Christ's life and death. In conclusion, we examine Giotto's handling of subjects from Christ's miracles to the Christian Last Judgment of all humanity.

Outline

- I. We return to the Arena Chapel, considering it from the interior, looking toward the apse, to explore scenes that reflect the life of Christ.
 - A. Two scenes are fairly visible in our example. On the right-hand wall, in the middle tier, is the *Flight into Egypt*. On the left-hand wall, also in the middle tier, is the *Baptism of Christ*. We will look at both of these more closely, but before we continue, let's look briefly at the *Annunciation* again.
 1. The *Annunciation* takes place on either side of the arch, with the Angel Gabriel on the left, the Virgin Mary on the right, and God the Father shown above.
 2. Note the rooms that Gabriel and the Virgin Mary inhabit. The architecture in the painting is tilted so that the figures can be seen from the center, conveying a sense of space and of volume.
 3. Observe the consistent use of light connecting the three figures.
 - B. Remember that everything in the chapel is painted except for the windows and arch. What first appear to be marble, sculptures, and horizontal bands are all painted.
- II. Let us continue to the south wall on the right.
 - A. In *Flight into Egypt*, once more, a dream plays an important role in the cycle of the Arena Chapel. An angel appeared to Joseph in a dream and warned him to flee with his family to Egypt because Herod was seeking to kill the child who would become king of the Jews.
 1. This scene shows Joseph leaving with his family. Note that the Madonna is a monumental figure. Her figure and the mountain behind her create a ledge of space that implies a sense of danger.
 2. Giotto used this scene to present an "everyday" moment, one of his favorite themes.
 3. The Madonna appears beige, but her robes were originally painted with azurite. The *secco* technique was used because azurite was too expensive to wash into the plaster, but the blue on the surface has

disappeared over time. However, the figure's form still reveals a strong, expressive image.

- B. *Massacre of the Innocents* shows the scene from which the Holy Family narrowly escaped.
 1. The painting shows a pile of infants slaughtered at Herod's command, as well as a circle of violence, with guards trying to murder children. Note the expressive angularity of the arms and the heads. Ironically, the scene takes place in front of a baptistery.
 2. The scene is framed by two men—one experiencing remorse, one a horrific executioner with a sword that was painted with the *fresco secco* technique in gold that has flaked off. This scene is horrifying to contemplate because such carnage is cyclic in human history.
- III. Many significant scenes are included on the ensemble of the north wall of the Arena Chapel, including *Christ among the Doctors*, the *Baptism*, the *Wedding at Cana*, the *Raising of Lazarus*, the *Entry into Jerusalem*, and the *Cleansing of the Temple*.
 - A. The *Baptism of Christ* was already a time-honored composition in painting, in both early Christian and Byzantine art.
 1. The scene shows two small island-like patches of rocky shore. On the left, angels hold Christ's clothes; on the right, Mary and Joseph watch as John the Baptist stretches out his hand above Christ's head, though he does not pour water in the baptism. The naked Jesus is seen through the water, with both Christ's nakedness and the transparency of the water part of the artistic tradition.
 2. A burst of light from the apparition of God the Father above indicates the divine presence. Jesus raises both arms in a gesture of acceptance.
 - B. In the *Wedding at Cana*, Jesus is on the left, the governor of the feast is at center, and Mary is seated beside the governor. This scene shows the first miracle attributed to Jesus.
 1. Jesus, his mother, and the disciples were invited to the wedding. Although Joseph is not mentioned in the Gospels, Giotto must surely intend the haloed old man in the corner to be Joseph.
 2. When the wine ran out, Jesus told the servants to fill the six empty stone pots with water, then to draw out a glass to serve the governor of the feast. When the governor tasted the water that had been transformed into wine, he remarked that at most dinners the host serves the good wine first, then the lesser wine, "but thou hast kept the good wine until now." This line foreshadows transubstantiation, the miraculous changing of Christ's blood into wine during the Christian Mass—the sacrament of the Eucharist, the central mystery of the faith. Perhaps the host's remark means that the New Order brought by Christ is the "good wine." Though

he is not drinking, the governor has a full glass at hand, as noted by the color, and his gesture is similar to that of a priest's blessing.

3. Giotto is as fond of the everyday aspects of the scene as he is concerned with symbolism. He represents the head steward of the feast sipping from a large flagon with a dubious expression. His corpulence repeats the shapes of the pots in front of him, emphasized by decorative striations and the creases in his tunic.

C. Following this scene is the *Raising of Lazarus*. Lazarus was the brother of Mary Magdalen and Martha. Because he was sick, they asked Jesus to come and cure him. By the time Jesus arrived, Lazarus had been dead and entombed for four days. Jesus told Martha, in words that have become a central tenet of the Christian faith: "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whomever lives and believes in me shall never die."

1. In the foreground, Lazarus's two sisters prostrate themselves in earnest belief in Jesus and his power to restore life. They are presented as a unified mass. The large sloping rock leads the eye to Jesus and to his hand, which is above the heads of Mary and Martha, isolated against blue sky. The slope also simultaneously expands his gesture—carrying the miraculous power from his hand across the composition to Lazarus.
2. Note the careful compositional balance of Jesus on the left and the upright, still-shrouded Lazarus at right. This painting is divided down the middle, with Jesus, his disciples, and the sisters on the left and those with Lazarus and the tomb at the right—the division between life and death.
3. Lazarus is flanked by two large figures, a bearded man and a woman whose face is covered. Behind her, another woman covers her nose with her veil, because, as Martha says in St. John's Gospel, "by this time he stinketh"—a reminder of mortality, one that Giotto and most painters of this scene indicate by the covering of noses.
4. There is a striking man in green mediating between the groups, gesturing toward Jesus while looking intently at Lazarus.
5. In the right foreground, two men are moving the marble slab that covered the vertical tomb behind Lazarus, while the barren, rocky mountain behind sprouts green trees as evidence of resurrection.
6. In a memorable touch that is part of Giotto's genius, the sisters are not yet aware, as the viewer is, that Lazarus's eyes and lips are already opening.

IV. We will bypass several scenes of the last days of Christ's ministry, including the *Entry into Jerusalem*, to concentrate on a few specific frescos.

- A. We go directly to the violent and unforgettable *Kiss of Judas (Capture of Christ)* in the middle of the bottom tier on the south wall.

1. The violence is not so much in the clash of bodies as in the bristling array of staves and torches that radiate out of the mass of humanity converging on Jesus.
2. Peter is shown severing the ear of the servant of the high priest.
3. In the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Mark, Judas offered to identify Jesus by kissing him. In Giotto's painting, it is Judas's embrace that betrays Jesus. His yellow robe envelops Jesus in the most brilliant passage in the composition. Giotto focuses all attention on the two heads in pure profile confrontation. He contrasts the nobility of Jesus' profile with the low-browed brutishness of Judas. Jesus meets Judas's eyes with an intensity that seems to stay the kiss.
4. This moment is described differently in the Gospel of St. Luke: When "Judas drew near unto Jesus to kiss him, . . . Jesus said unto him 'Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?'" This is a significant difference, given that no kiss follows. This version may have appealed to Giotto, who realized that the moment before an action often is more dramatic than the action itself.

B. Three more scenes following Christ's arrest precede the *Crucifixion*, a work that is severely symmetrical and frontal in presentation.

1. A group of soldiers and tormentors are shown at right; another group shows the Virgin Mary (fainting) along with John and some women at left.
2. Mary Magdalen kneels at the foot of the cross and wipes blood from Christ's feet with her hair. Although this is based on biblical text, Giotto alludes to the biblical washing of Christ's feet and her drying them with her hair that occurred earlier.
3. The cross bearing Christ divides the fresco. Ten small grieving angels are disposed symmetrically above—one above each arm of the cross; one at each corner of the fresco; one under each nailed hand, collecting blood in a chalice; one collecting blood from the lance wound in his side, while his counterpart on the right bares his chest in anguish; and so on.
4. This symmetry, and the fact that Christ appears lifeless on the cross, makes this scene more symbolic than narrative. Emotions are expressed but with remarkable restraint. Only the centurion Longinus, who lanced Christ's side, looks up at Christ, because he has been converted. No other eyes are on Christ.

C. This scene contrasts greatly with the *Lamentation*. Now, all eyes are on the dead body laid out in the foreground, and Giotto presents the human tragedy of death and of the bereft. It is Christ who is dead, but it is also everyman, and it is, likewise, everyman who remains behind.

1. In the foreground, the body is protected from a closer gaze by two massive, anonymous blocks of figures who sit with their backs to

us. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus stand at the far right in front of the high point of a rock topped by a small dead tree.

2. The rock begins its sloping descent, encountering the grieving John, who leans forward and throws his arms backward, wing-like. Below him, one of the holy women bends over Jesus, and below her, seated in dejection at his feet, is Mary Magdalene.
3. The height of emotion is reached at the end of this diagonal of grief, where the Virgin cradles her son in her lap, supported by her knee, their two haloed heads placed in intense juxtaposition, a concentration of tenderness and sorrow.
4. In the sky, the 10 angels of the crucifixion return to provide their own lament in counterpoint to the long lines, dramatic pauses, and resounding chords of the human mourners. Perhaps the pictorial representation of great loss and grief in this fresco has never been surpassed.

V. Next, we look at the huge fresco on the inside wall of the entrance façade of the chapel, which is not part of the life of Mary or Christ.

A. *The Last Judgment* is part of the interior of the Arena Chapel.

1. As visitors originally saw the *Annunciation* first upon entering the chapel, so they saw *The Last Judgment* when leaving. An announcement of the Second Coming and the final judgment of humanity, it is the same scene carved in stone over the doorways of medieval churches but vastly enlarged. It is not without precedent—such huge Last Judgments exist elsewhere.
2. Although this work is not considered Giotto's masterpiece in the chapel (and was probably painted in large part by assistants), it is the final, essential piece of this great cycle, because it is the end of history as envisaged by Christian theologians, and in the Scrovegni family burial chapel, their final judgment as well.
3. In the work, we see a detail of Enrico Scrovegni kneeling at the foot of the cross, offering a model of his chapel to the Virgin Mary, accompanied by a saint and an angel. He is positioned at the right hand of the enthroned Christ of the Last Judgment, among the saved.

B. *The Last Judgment* reminds us that Giotto clearly belongs to the Middle Ages. But when looking at the *Lamentation* and many of Giotto's other poignant images of humanity, we must remember that he was also the most remarkable precursor and one of the greatest sources of the Italian Renaissance of the 15th century.

VI. One other matter of significance must be mentioned here. Although we know the names of occasional earlier artists in the history of art, they remain essentially anonymous. With Giotto, a new phenomenon arises—from now on, the history of art is also the history of great artists.

Works Discussed:

Giotto:

Flight into Egypt, Massacre of the Innocents, Baptism of Christ, Marriage at Cana, Raising of Lazarus, Kiss of Judas, Crucifixion, Lamentation, The Last Judgment, c. 1305, fresco, overall: 69' L x 26' W x 43' H, Scrovegni (Arena) Chapel, Padua, Italy.

Further Reading:

Giuseppe Basile, *Giotto: Frescoes in the Scrovegni Chapel*.

James H. Stubblebine, ed., *Giotto: The Arena Chapel Frescoes: Illustrations, Introductory Essay, Backgrounds and Sources, Criticism*.

Questions to Consider:

1. What artistic devices did Giotto use in his paintings to convey emotional intensity?
2. Do you think that Giotto emphasized some aspects of Christ's life more than others? Was any one scene more important than another? Which is the most memorable?

Lecture Eight

Duccio and the *Maestà*

Scope: In this lecture, we consider the work of Duccio di Buoninsegna, specifically his masterpiece, the *Maestà*. We compare Duccio and his great contemporary, Giotto, in terms of their reputation and their technique. We'll also examine several panels from the *Maestà*, including the large central altarpiece and scenes from the pinnacles and the predella. Doing our best to view the *Maestà* as a whole, we will look at possible reconstructions of the work and at the many pieces that are located in different museums, as well as the original cathedral where it was created.

Outline

- I. Duccio di Buoninsegna (1255/60–1315/18) is known simply as Duccio, the first great painter from Siena.
 - A. Duccio is often compared with his Florentine contemporary, Giotto, and usually to his disadvantage.
 1. Giotto, as a true and obvious precursor of the early-15th-century Florentine Renaissance, is the beneficiary of the modern era's Darwinian belief in progress—that the most important art is that which makes an obvious advance on what came before.
 2. We should recognize this bias, because great artists have always existed whose art was not in the forefront of “progress,” however that might have been defined at the time.
 - B. Duccio is an artist clearly indebted to and reflective of the artistic ideals of the late Middle Ages, of the Gothic period in Italy, and of the Byzantine tradition, which was well established in Italy. Instead of the powerful Naturalism of Giotto, Duccio accepted the lyrical and austere beauty of Byzantine art and imbued it with the spirit of the Humanism that was issuing from the newly founded Franciscan and Dominican orders. However, each artist was aware of the other's work.
 - C. We know as little about the artistic origins of Duccio—his training or apprenticeship—as we do about Giotto's. Although Duccio was Sienese and his style is often defined as Sienese, in contrast to Florentine, he was sometimes commissioned by Florentine patrons. The *Rucellai Madonna* that we looked at in Lecture Five was commissioned for the Florentine church of Sta. Maria Novella. But because of the artistic rivalry between the two cities in the 16th century, that painting long was attributed to a Florentine, Cimabue.
 - D. Duccio is regarded today with the same bias in most general textbooks, but many museums recognize his significance. For example, the

Metropolitan Museum acquired a small but beautiful painting by Duccio in 2004 at a considerable price (*Madonna and Child*, c. 1300).

- II. In this lecture, we focus on Duccio's unquestioned masterpiece, the *Maestà* (1308–1311), which means “majesty.” This work shows the Madonna and Child enthroned, surrounded by adoring saints and angels. The Italian word applies to all large paintings of the subject, but only Duccio's is universally known as the *Maestà*.
 - A. In 1260, a great victory over Florentine forces was credited to divine intervention by the Virgin Mary. One day after the Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin, the people dedicated themselves and their city to her protection, thus making her the patron saint of Siena. This veneration explains the people's joy when Duccio's completed altarpiece was taken to the cathedral in 1311.
 - B. A contemporary account describes this occasion: “On the 9th of June, at midday, the Sienese carried the altarpiece in great devotion to the cathedral in a procession... They accompanied the painting up to the cathedral, walking in procession around the Campo, while all the bells rang joyfully.”
 - C. Notwithstanding the devotion with which the Sienese regarded the Virgin Mary, it is truly unique that the general populace of any city would carry a work of art in triumphant procession. This is compelling evidence for art historian Edgar Wind's essay about art at the center of a culture, as it once was, and art at the margins of society, as it now is.
- III. Our example shows a badly damaged *Maestà* with the pinnacles (top) and the predella (bottom) missing. This work has undergone reconstruction at various times in its existence. Let's consider its history.
 - A. The *Maestà* was commissioned for the high altar of the Sienese Cathedral of Santa Maria in 1308 and completed in 1311. It was, before alterations, about 13 ½ feet wide and 7 feet high. It was painted on both sides, and thus, its painted area was about 188 square feet. It was very large, but recall that each of Giotto's frescoed scenes was about 6 ½ feet wide—the *Maestà* was just over twice as wide as a single fresco in the Arena Chapel.
 - B. Duccio's work is sometimes small, especially on the reverse, the side facing away from the nave. The many predella panels are also intentionally small. Their quality resides partly in the finely detailed, subtly composed scenes that often measure only about 17 or 18 inches square. There is a vast difference in technique between fresco, with its broadly painted areas, and tempera, which often is painstaking but well-suited for small formats. The *Maestà* was executed in tempera.
 1. With tempera, ground colors are suspended in egg yolk thinned with water. Because tempera dries quickly, only a small area can be painted before change is impossible. Tempera paintings are

generally on panels that have been coated with a smooth layer of gesso. In the medieval period, gold leaf was often used for decorative splendor or for the entire background of the painting, which greatly increases the reflection of light.

2. This medium also permits colors that are subtle and sumptuous, where fresco tends to have more muted colors. (Another reason *fresco secco* was used was to intensify the color of certain areas.)
 - C. The famous altarpiece remained on the high altar until 1505, when it was removed to a side chapel in the cathedral; in 1771, the two sides—front and back—of the painting were separated by sawing it apart! Subsequently, some of the panels from the predella and the pinnacles were separated from the altar, sold off by cathedral authorities, and are now in museums in London, New York, and Washington, DC. The altarpiece as it remained was at last placed in the cathedral museum, where it is today.
- IV. Looking at the *Maestà* from the front, we see the Madonna and Child enthroned with saints and angels present.
- A. Note the size of the figures—they faced the congregation and could be seen clearly from some distance, intended for contemplation. Figures of this weight, solidity, and substance were new to Siena.
 - B. The enthroned Madonna and Child are flanked by a kneeling row of saints, a standing row of saints and archangels, and a back row of angels who continue up and around the throne. Note the upper part of the Madonna, with angels leaning on the throne.
 - C. The predella shows seven scenes of the infancy of Christ (these had to be seen at close range), while scenes from the life of Mary can be seen on the pinnacles.
 - D. At the far left, we find St. Catherine of Alexandria. This type of face, less stylized than in Byzantine art, is typical of Duccio in its quiet solemnity. Her head is draped in a veil that reveals its shape. The richly embroidered robe has been simulated by first laying down gold leaf, then painting over it, and then scratching away the paint with a tool so that a golden damask design appears.
 - E. Our next example shows a scene from the lower left predella, which was separated and sold. The *Annunciation* is now in the National Gallery in London. Observe the colors of the angel and the shallow architectural space.
 - F. Consider the second predella scene of the *Nativity* (National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC). Two saints who prophesied the birth of Christ—Isaiah and Ezekiel—flank the striking image of the Nativity.
 1. This image shows a combination of stable (European tradition) and cave (Byzantine tradition). The Virgin reclines on a Roman-style mattress.

2. As in other Nativities we have seen, there is a simultaneous narrative, with the Child being bathed in the foreground while already in the manger in the background. The chalice-like tub is a reference to Mass.
 3. Observe the Naturalism of the sheep and the glorious color palette.
- V. We now consider the reconstruction of the reverse side of the *Maestà*. Our next image shows a possible reconstruction, including the missing works—some works have been lost and never located. This side faced the sanctuary; thus, only the clergy and the monks' choir would have seen this side, which had some 40 scenes that constitute a kind of scriptural commentary. Several scenes from Christ's life are shown in the main section and the predella. We'll look at some of these in detail.
- A. On the predella is the *Temptation of Christ*.
 1. According to the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, Satan tempted Jesus three times. The third time, he took Jesus to a high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world; these Satan offered to Jesus "if thou wilt fall down and worship me." Jesus replied, "Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."
 2. Duccio has imagined all the kingdoms of the world as a large handful of Tuscan walled cities, marvelously detailed miniature constructions. His Sieneese contemporaries must have enjoyed this depiction.
 - B. Next to this scene is the *Calling of Peter and Andrew*. Note the gold ground, the isolation of Christ's beckoning hand, and the clarity of the storytelling even from a distance.
 - C. The *Wedding at Cana* is a detailed and busy scene. There are two noticeable figures—one pours the water-become-wine into the other's glass. Note the contrasts between Giotto's and Duccio's depictions of this scene.
 - D. Our next scene, *Transfiguration*, is an unfamiliar theme to many viewers.
 1. When Jesus went with Peter, James, and John to pray on a mountaintop, the disciples witnessed Jesus "transfigured before them, and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light." Then they saw Moses and Elijah talking with Jesus. By invoking the Law (Moses) and the Prophets (Elijah), the Gospels here confer significant authority on Jesus.
 2. This is an important work because it has beautiful colors and an impressively severe design. It is also the sort of visionary theological scene that was best painted in the more abstract Byzantine style. Such scenes were not especially congenial to

Giotto, with his strong Humanist bent; however, the story suited Duccio's style and taste.

- E. On the top left pinnacle is *The Incredulity of Thomas*, which is still in Siena. This scene shows Jesus revealing his wounds to "doubting Thomas." That this is a post-Resurrection Jesus is signaled by his robe striated with gold.

VI. Finally, we look at the reverse side of the *Maestà* as it now is.

- A. *Christ and Apostles on the Mount of Olives* shows Christ praying while the apostles sleep.
- B. *The Capture of Christ* draws attention to the lances in the center, Christ's robe, and the apostles fleeing.
- C. Duccio's *Crucifixion* is a narrative scene in contrast to Giotto's more theological, symbolic treatment of the subject in the Arena Chapel. All three crosses are shown, amidst a boisterous crowd scene, with a great variety of expressions, ranging from fear and hatred to silence and grief. Christ's body is turned toward the repentant thief, and the blood and water of salvation flow from Christ's side toward him, while the unrepentant thief is turned away from Christ, into shadow.
- D. *Entombment* shows a scene in which Jesus is tenderly laid in the sarcophagus. The emotion is restrained except for Mary Magdalene's up-thrown arms, but all the figures turn inward and pull our eyes to Mary's head as it presses against her son's, while she touches his face in farewell. The rock is expressive, but it is the intense red of the three robes above Christ that symbolizes death.

Works Discussed:

Duccio di Buoninsegna:

Madonna and Child, c. 1300, tempera and gold on wood; overall, with engaged frame: 11 x 8 1/4" (27.9 x 21 cm), painted surface: 9 3/8 x 6 1/2" (23.8 x 16.5 cm), The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Cloisters Collection, New York City, New York, USA.

Maestà, 1308–11, tempera and gold leaf on panel, originally about 7' x 13' 6", Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Metropolitana, Siena, Italy.

Annunciation, 17 x 17 1/4" (43 x 44 cm), from the *Maestà*, National Gallery, London, Great Britain.

Nativity, 17 1/4 x 30 1/2" (43.8 x 77.5 cm), and *Calling of Peter and Andrew*, 17 x 18" (43.5 x 46 cm), from the *Maestà*, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., USA.

Temptation of Christ, 17 x 18" (43.5 x 46 cm), from the *Maestà*, The Frick Collection, New York City, New York, USA.

Wedding at Cana, *The Transfiguration*, *The Incredulity of Thomas*, *Christ on the Mount of Olives*, *The Capture of Christ*, *The Crucifixion*, and *The Entombment*, from the *Maestà*, Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Metropolitana, Siena, Italy.

Further Reading:

Luciano Bellosi, *Duccio: The Maestà*.

Giulietta Chelazzi Dini, Alessandro Angelini, and Bernardina Sani, *Sienese Painting: From Duccio to the Birth of the Baroque*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Compare and contrast Duccio and Giotto. How do they interpret the same subjects differently?
2. As this lecture has discussed, the *Maestà* is no longer one complete work; various pieces are in different locations. How does this affect your viewing of the subject matter and the work itself?

Lecture Nine

Sieneese Art in the 14th Century

Scope: We begin this lecture by discussing the historical influence of the Italian city-state during this period and its relationship to artistic representations. We continue exploring other artists succeeding Duccio in Siena, such as Simone Martini, Pietro Lorenzetti, and Ambrogio Lorenzetti. Finally, we examine the Palazzo Pubblico, a civic building in Siena and a significant monument to the Italian Gothic, with its detailed frescoes of Sieneese scenes.

Outline

- I. The Italian phrase *ma paese* means “my country,” but first and foremost, it means “my town” or “my city,” defining a person by the place where he or she was born. This identification with place also meant that the larger entities—regional or national governments—may govern people, but they are not the controlling factors in people’s lives.
 - A. This concept is critical in understanding Italy and the development of the Italian city-state. City-states were communes that had developed as self-governing units during the chaotic period of the barbarian invasions, the dissolution of the Roman Empire, and the social disruption of a huge political unit into dukedoms and other fiefdoms based on military power.
 - B. The city-states that arose in the central portion of the Italian peninsula were often republics—mercantile cities dominated by mercantile interests—and they were often at war with their neighbors. They were proud of their independence and regarded themselves as civic polities united for the good of their citizens.
- II. Siena was a bitter rival to Florence, 45 miles to the north, which like Siena, had important banking operations throughout Europe.
 - A. Despite the intense political hostility between the two cities, there was regular cultural interchange; artists from one sometimes worked for patrons in the other.
 - B. One of the most important Sieneese painters following in the footsteps of Duccio was Simone Martini (1284–1344). He was probably Duccio’s pupil, and he emulated the elegant linearity and coloristic brilliance of his teacher. He was also influenced by Giovanni Pisano’s sculpture and French art.
- III. Our first example shows Simone Martini’s *Annunciation*. This famous altarpiece was painted for a chapel in the Siena Cathedral.
 - A. The lateral saints were painted by Lippo Memmi, a pupil and brother-in-law of Simone, but the entire center panel is by Simone.
 - B. Note the elaborate architecture in the frame, with many cusps, twisted columns, complex gables, pinnacles, and intricately tooled designs in the gold leaf that dominates the ensemble.
 - C. The main panel is a stunning blaze of orange and gold—the background wall, the Archangel Gabriel’s wings and plaid cloak, and Mary’s throne. The colors are repeated in the radiance of the Holy Spirit as a dove, the urn holding the lilies, and the veined marble pavement. The brilliance of the colors is analogous to the effect of the *Annunciation* on Mary.
 - D. As Gabriel alights, he thrusts his head forward into the center of the painting, and his words, which are embossed on the gold ground, proceed from his head to hers. *Ave gratia plena dominus tecum* means “Hail thou that art full of grace, the Lord is with thee.” The force of the angel’s arrival and news seems to push Mary away. She shrinks from him and looks startled and unhappy.
 - E. Simone’s masterpiece is nearly two-dimensional in effect. The sweep and visual bounce of the gold and the emphasis on contour and line assure this, and it is especially apparent when compared with our next example.
- IV. Ambrogio Lorenzetti’s *Presentation in the Temple* was also painted for the Cathedral of Siena and is now in Florence.
 - A. Here the pictorial space is developed carefully and convincingly. The figures are proportionately larger than the architecture, as in Giotto and Duccio, and the architecture attracts our eyes. This is one of the first fully developed renderings of architectural space in late medieval painting.
 - B. Joseph and Mary have brought Jesus to the temple to be “consecrated to the Lord.” They have handed him to Simeon, who had been told he would not die before he had seen the Christ. The prophetess Anna stands behind him holding a scroll with a passage from the Gospel of Luke relating this event.
 - C. Ambrogio has characterized the holy figures with attention to detail and painted their costumes with rich colors worthy of Sieneese life and art.
- V. We now look at Pietro Lorenzetti who, with his brother Ambrogio, dominated Sieneese painting after Simone Martini left the city to paint elsewhere. Simone was called to do work in Naples and later in Avignon, which was the seat of the papacy during much of the 14th century.
 - A. In the 1320s, Pietro was summoned to paint a major fresco cycle at the Basilica of San Francesco (St. Francis) at Assisi, which had become one of the most important pilgrimage sites in Italy after St. Francis was

buried there, in the town of his birth, in 1230. Many of Italy's finest artists worked in Assisi, including Giotto some 30 years earlier.

- B. Assisi consists of an upper church, where Giotto worked, and a lower church. Pietro was given the task of overseeing the decoration of the walls and vaults of the left transept of the lower church.
- C. Our example shows the Lorenzetti Chapel in the lower church. The subject of the fresco cycle is the Passion of Christ, beginning with *The Entry into Jerusalem*. This scene is at the end of our view of the transept chapel and not visible in our example.
 - 1. Pietro learned much from Giotto's example, but he remains an artist for whom detail, both decorative and narrative, was irresistible.
 - 2. *Entry into Jerusalem* marks the beginning of Christ's Passion. Note the children climbing the trees for a better view and the city architecture.

VI. The Palazzo Pubblico (1297–1342), or the Town Hall of Siena, is one of the most elegant monuments of the Italian Gothic.

- A. Piazza del Campo has always been the center of civic life in Siena. Siena is a hilly town, and the Campo slopes with the shape of half a conch shell.
- B. In the Sala del Consiglio (Council Hall), Palazzo Pubblico, Simone Martini's *Maestà* (c. 1315, partially repainted in 1321) is on the end wall.
 - 1. Unlike Duccio's altarpiece, this work is a wall decoration—a fresco (much of it *secco* and, therefore, damaged). It is painted as if it were a tapestry.
 - 2. The Virgin and Child enthroned and a court of saints are covered by a canopy supported by slender poles, perhaps a reflection of an actual structure used to protect secular rulers outdoors or to protect the Eucharist when carried in procession. The sag of the canopy enhances the illusion that the painting is a tapestry, because it recalls the sag of a tapestry hanging on a wall.
 - 3. The subject is framed by the simulated architecture and tapestry border, containing roundels with heads of the fathers of the Church and prophets.
- C. Simone's *Guidoriccio da Fogliano* (c. 1328) is an equestrian portrait of a Sienese captain painted to celebrate a major victory he had won that year. This faces the *Maestà* from the other end of the room and covers the whole upper part of that wall.
 - 1. No landscape of such ambition had yet been painted in Italy or anywhere since ancient Roman times.

- 2. The painting shows the fortified town that was captured, a fortress, and battle encampments. The “toy” towns in the painting are still large because of the fresco's 40-foot width.

VII. We now take a close look at the groups of frescoes that are the *Allegories of Good and Bad Government* in the Sala della Pace, Palazzo Pubblico.

- A. Our photo shows only the two walls with the *Allegory of Good Government*; the other wall, *Bad Government*, has deteriorated considerably. The hall is directly behind the large council chamber and was the room where the “nine lords” or governors of Siena met. Simone had been the city's official painter, but when he moved to Avignon, Ambrogio Lorenzetti succeeded him in Siena, and he fulfilled this important commission.
- B. Ambrogio's *Allegory of Good Government*, representing the Commune of Siena (1338–1339), is on the end wall. The personified image of Siena is the huge old man holding a scepter and orb, dressed in the colors of the republic, and flanked by the cardinal and theological virtues, while the Three Graces—Faith, Hope, and Charity—hover above. Farther to the left, the large female figure is Justice personified, dispensing rewards and punishments. Wisdom floats above Justice.
- C. The citizens who made up the Great Council are arrayed across the front on a lower stage.
- D. Peace, the figure for whom this hall is named (Sala della Pace), finds herself with nothing to do, so effective is the government. She lolls idly in the center in a white dress between Siena and Justice. Ambrogio borrowed her pose from an ancient Roman sarcophagus still in the Palazzo Pubblico today.

VIII. *Effects of Good Government in the City and the Country* is a continuous, wall-length painting—about 46 feet long—surely the most important monumental civic image in Italy during the 14th century.

- A. These may be allegories of government, but unlike the allegory of the Commune that we just saw, these ignore symbolic images and concentrate on 14th-century Siena. We will look at this wall in two parts: city and country, starting at the point that divides them—the city wall and gate.
- B. In *Effects of Good Government in the City*, the architecture, a mix of Romanesque and Gothic, commands the scene. In the upper left corner is the black-and-white bell tower of the cathedral. Gray is the dominant color of the foreground buildings, while behind them, deep red and light pink buildings seem to introduce sunlight into the middle ground. This is a city still in the making—we see a building with scaffolding and workmen carrying materials and laying stone or brick.

1. The townspeople and farmers mingle on the streets, forming a line from the city gate at right that exits at the lower left. This leads the eye toward the wall with the *Allegory of Good Government*.
 2. The city gate at right shows people entering and leaving and donkeys carrying goods accompanied by farmers. In front, there is a herd of sheep, a woman carrying a basket on her head, and another woman holding a fowl. There is bustling in the background—goods being exchanged or shops being set up.
 3. The central architectural group is defined by a triple loggia: At the right is a merchant setting out containers; in the middle is a schoolroom with the schoolmaster addressing his pupils; and on the left is a shoemaker's shop with three artisans at work and one customer approaching.
 4. A group of ten women dance in a circle while one keeps rhythm on her tambourine. This portrayal is intended to symbolize the civility, culture, and pleasure of the city.
 5. In the large arched opening in the next building are several men conversing and perhaps gambling (the mural is damaged here). The building's upper story has elegant windows with single mullions. Note the small procession of persons on horseback and on foot heading toward another gate.
- C. We next turn to *Effects of Good Government in the Country*.
1. As donkeys are coming in the gate, a pair of Siennese nobles is going out on a hawking expedition in the country. In the foreground, men tend a vineyard and farmers lead a hog and heavily laden donkeys up the steep slope, contrasting sharply with the hunters.
 2. At the bottom of the hill, huntsmen and dogs are seen in the field. In the lower right corner, more donkeys with produce from the country cross a red stone bridge on their way to the city.
 3. Tuscan hills of many sizes and shapes are in the background, some planted in vineyards, others perhaps with orchards, farms, castles, or villages. In the distance are heavily forested areas with sharper mountain ridges beyond.
 4. The lady floating in the air by the city gate is the personification of Security. In her right hand, a scroll announces the tranquility and peace that the Commune of Siena provides; in her left hand, a miniature gallows shows the corpse of someone who threatened that peace and paid the price.
- D. Overall, the *Allegories of Good and Bad Government* constitute a glorious decorative scheme for the proud city-commune. This was just before the plague of 1348, an overwhelming crisis in Europe. The Black Death left Siena city development frozen in its age of glory. Its artists were among the victims; both Ambrogio Lorenzetti and his

brother Pietro are presumed to have died in the plague, but this mural leaves a record of the prosperous calm before the calamitous storm.

Works Discussed:

Palazzo Pubblico, 1297–1342, Siena, Italy.

Simone Martini:

Annunciation (St. Ansano Altarpiece), 1333, tempera on panel, 10' x 8' 9" (184 x 210 cm), Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy.

Maestà, 1315, fresco, 25' x 31' 9" (763 x 970 cm), Sala del Consiglio, Palazzo Pubblico, Siena, Italy.

Guidoriccio da Fogliano, 1328, fresco, 40' W (12.2 m), Sala del Consiglio, Palazzo Pubblico, Siena, Italy.

Ambrogio Lorenzetti:

Presentation in the Temple, 1342, tempera on panel, 8' 5 ¼" x 5' 6 ¼" (257 x 168 cm), Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy.

Allegory of Good Government, 1338–39, fresco, 25' 3" W (7.7 m W), Sala della Pace, Palazzo Pubblico, Siena, Italy.

Effects of Good Government in the City and the Country, 1338–39, fresco, 46' W (14 m W), Sala della Pace, Palazzo Pubblico, Siena, Italy.

Pietro Lorenzetti:

The Entry into Jerusalem, 1320–30, fresco, Lorenzetti Chapel, Basilica of S. Francesco, Assisi, Italy.

Further Reading:

Timothy Hyman, *Siennese Painting: The Art of a City-Republic*.

Hayden B. J. Maginnis, *The World of the Early Siennese Painter*.

Questions to Consider:

1. How was Ambrogio Lorenzetti influenced by other Italian artists?
2. Think about the significance of the *Allegories of Good and Bad Government* painted inside the Palazzo Pubblico, the Town Hall. How are these similar to the artwork found in our civic buildings today?

Lecture Ten

The Black Death and the International Style

Scope: Picking up from our last lecture, we discuss how the bubonic plague of the mid-14th century affected art as a whole. In this same vein, we also compare artistic renditions of the same subject from works before and after the plague. We then trace the rise of the International Gothic style in specific works by artists from different regions. Finally, we will see how the International style influenced Italy and laid the foundation for the Italian Renaissance of the 15th century.

Outline

- I. In the previous lecture, we looked at the prosperous city-state of Siena in the early 14th century and its compelling art. As mentioned, the plague crushed Siena's civic and artistic development.
 - A. The Black Death affected not only Siena but swept through Europe and parts of Asia and killed three-quarters of the population in 20 years. When the plague exploded in Italy, Siena and Florence were already vulnerable from two years of severe agricultural and economic losses.
 - B. In Florence, 45,000 out of 90,000 inhabitants died in the summer of 1348. In Siena, 27,000 out of a population of 42,000 perished. As a result, the plague radically changed the course of society and art.
- II. In the cloistered burial ground called the Campo Santo in Pisa, a fresco attributed to Francesco Traini, *Triumph of Death*, summed up the prevailing pessimism.
 - A. Our example shows an aerial view of Pisa's Campo Santo. The *Triumph of Death* is a panorama reminiscent of Ambrogio Lorenzetti's panorama of good government in the city and country. Some scholars attribute this work to an anonymous "Master of the *Triumph of Death*," and others think it was completed before the plague of 1348. Although Traini was a minor Pisan artist, the plague may have eliminated much of the competition for this commission.
 - B. The right side of this fresco recalls Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron*, with aristocratic young people making music, conversing, and playing with pets. The painter reminds us that those in the prime of youth are still subject to the same fate as all mankind. Note the flying woman with long white hair and a scythe swooping down on the party from the left, a personification of Death. Above the group, angels vie with demons for the souls of the dead.
 - C. The left side of the fresco shows a group of horsemen encountering three coffins—those of a wealthy man, a clergyman, and a king.

- D. The Humanistic art of Giotto was cancelled out as if it had never existed. Gone are the narrative pleasure of Duccio, the clash of Simone Martini's colors and the civic pride embodied in his *Guidoriccio*, and the embracing of the contemporary world in Ambrogio Lorenzetti's *Effects of Good Government*. These are replaced by a severe art that emphasized guilt and the need to repent and in which mysticism and the authority of the Church offered hope.

III. Let's look at some other works from this difficult period.

- A. Our next example shows Andrea Orcagna's *Enthroned Christ with Madonna and Saints* (1354–1357). This is the first altarpiece with a full-length, adult Christ in the central field of the painting in either Florentine or Sienese painting. This severe depiction represents a Christ who grants authority—to St. Peter at right—and disseminates theological doctrine—to St. Thomas Aquinas at left.
- B. An excellent demonstration of the changes that occurred in art can be found in a comparison between Ambrogio Lorenzetti's *Presentation in the Temple* (c. 1342), which we examined in the last lecture, and Bartolo di Fredi's *Presentation in the Temple* (c. 1353). Here is an astonishing transformation, or regression, of style in just 11 years.
- C. We also see drastic changes by comparing two more works with the same subject.
 1. Luca di Tommè's *Raising of Lazarus* (c. 1360) shows densely packed figures, leaving no room for more than a stylized landscape at the top. St. Peter's placement next to Jesus suggests that the painting may have been commissioned by the Vatican. Christ's elongated arm stretches halfway across the painting to Lazarus, and the straight band running from Christ's mouth must have held the words recorded in the Gospel of St. John, "Lazarus, come forth."
 2. Compare this to Giotto's earlier *Raising of Lazarus* (c. 1305–1307, Arena Chapel). Tommè's version doesn't have the human quality, narrative complexity, or nuance of Giotto's interpretation. This has been abandoned for a certain severity; we are to regard the miracle in a strictly theological way, rather than in narrative terms.
- D. Another comparison involves different *Pietà*s. Giovanni da Milano's *Pietà* (c. 1365) presents Christ supported by the Madonna and St. Mary Magdalene, with another saint behind them. The German *Pietà* (c. 1300), which we saw in Lecture Five, has a Nordic intensity. In a kind of compulsory act, both artists are intent on forcing us to confront the dead body of Christ in these works.

- IV. Such profound pessimism could not last, and toward the end of the century, a new spirit arose throughout Europe, called the *International Gothic* style. This style may be seen as a reaction against the severe religiosity that followed the Black Death. It seems to be a rebirth of courtly late-Gothic

art—in fact, a reprise of the waning Gothic style might have been instinctive for artists.

A. Our example shows an anonymous work, the *Wilton Diptych*, (c. 1395–1399). This magnificent but small diptych was commissioned for the private devotions of Richard II of England. The tempera technique is Italian, and the style is close to Sienese art; it was probably painted by an Italian, a Frenchman, or even a central European Bohemian artist working at the English court.

1. The image of Richard is probably a real portrait, not idealized. Richard's patron saint was St. John the Baptist, and he touches the king's shoulder; the other saints are English: King Edmund and King Edward the Confessor.
2. Note the right-hand panel, where the Virgin and Child are glorified amid angels. All the angels have a white hart (deer) embroidered on their robes; the personal device of Richard, seen also on his costume.
3. The contrast of the gold-dominated left wing with the blue-dominated right wing and the simplicity of the symmetrical design are strong and charming.

B. This new International style is less symbolic; it finds more beauty in actual observations than in symbols.

C. The Limbourg Brothers were famous manuscript painters, and their most famous work is probably *Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry* ("Very Rich Hours of the Duke of Berry"). The duke was one of the Burgundian dukes who dominated northern Europe at this time, and his passion was books. A book of hours is a prayer book often, as here, attached to a calendar decorated with miniatures of the months of the year. Our example shows the Limbourg brothers' *February* from the *Très Riches Heures* (c. 1413–1416).

D. Another anonymous work, a *Madonna and Child* (c. 1400), is a tender representation about the size of a manuscript page.

V. The International style was also pervasive in Italy.

A. Lorenzo Monaco was born in Siena (1370–1425) but later moved to Florence where he entered a monastery and became an artist. His paintings are marked by intimacy, restraint, and a delicate lyricism. *Coronation of the Virgin* (c. 1413) is an entire altarpiece painted by Lorenzo. Exquisite color and large, gracefully drawn figures characterize the painting, in which some effects of volume are countered by weightlessness.

B. *Adoration of the Magi* (c. 1423) by Gentile da Fabriano (1385–1427) was an influential painting, with its gold leaf and sumptuous color. The rich costumes of the magi are physically enhanced by building up the surface with molded gesso to emulate crowns or other costume

elements. Note the serpentine composition that is a significant aspect of the painting. There is no horizon; the land just rises straight up.

C. Gentile's *Flight into Egypt* on the center panel of the predella of the *Adoration* looks to Ambrogio Lorenzetti's *Guidoriccio*, but it is much smaller, and its advances are in Gentile's love of naturalistic detail and his exploration of atmospheric effects. In this last development, he belongs with the Italian sculptors then at work, who are among the most significant artists to lay the foundation for the Renaissance.

VI. Let's briefly define the term *Renaissance*. The English language took this term, meaning "rebirth," directly from the French. In Italian, *rinascimento* means "rebirth" or "revival." Among the intelligentsia and ruling classes of Italy, there was a rebirth of interest in Classical literature and culture.

A. Latin was still the language of Italian scholarship and the Church. Some scholars read Greek, but most read Greek literature in Latin translation. Those who wanted to read Classical literature needed access to manuscripts or copies of them.

B. Cosimo de' Medici (1389–1464), the first of the Medici to rule Florence, was a patron of Classical culture and founder of the Neo-Platonic Academy in Florence, an early literary society. Its members included Leon Battista Alberti, the great architect. In this pre-printing-press era, copying manuscripts was essential to satisfy the need for Classical literature, and Cosimo had hundreds copied.

C. *Humanism*, a term that is intimately associated with the Renaissance, is also the product of the Classical revival; the emphasis was on man, not God, because the pre-Christian writers had a different focus on man and the origins of the world.

D. The intellectuals of the Renaissance era were challenged with integrating Classical and Christian thought. In fact, Renaissance Neo-Platonism does not indicate a concentration mainly on Plato's ideas but was developed from the last great pagan philosopher, Plotinus, in the 3rd century A.D., seven centuries after Plato.

E. *Renaissance* should be used as a cultural, not a stylistic, term, because there were many styles during the Renaissance. However, they were grounded in a common culture that came from the balancing of Classical and Christian traditions.

Works Discussed:

Francesco Traini:

Triumph of Death, c. 1325–50, fresco, Camposanto, Pisa, Italy.

Andrea Orcagna:

Enthroned Christ with Madonna and Saints (Strozzi Altarpiece), 1354–57, oil on panel, Church of Sta. Maria Novella, Florence, Italy.

Ambrogio Lorenzetti:

Presentation in the Temple, 1342, tempera on panel, 8' 5 1/4" x 5' 6 1/4" (257 x 168 cm), Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy.

Bartolo di Fredi:

Presentation in the Temple, 1353, oil on panel, 6 x 4' (190 x 125 cm) Musée du Louvre, Paris, France.

Luca di Tommè:

Raising of Lazarus, c. 1360, Pinacoteca, Vatican Museums, Vatican State, Rome, Italy.

Giovanni da Milano:

Pietà, 1365, oil on panel, 48 x 22 3/4" (122 x 57.5 cm), Galleria dell'Accademia, Florence, Italy.

Artists unknown:

Wilton Diptych, c. 1395–99, tempera on panel, 22 1/2 x 11 1/2" (57 x 29.2 cm), National Gallery, London, Great Britain.

Virgin and Child, c. 1400, oil on panel, 8 1/4 x 6" (21 x 15 cm), Musée du Louvre, Paris, France.

Limbourg Brothers:

February, from the *Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry*, c. 1413–16, illumination, 8 1/2 x 5 1/2" (21.5 x 14 cm), Musée Condé, Chantilly, France.

Lorenzo Monaco:

Coronation of the Virgin, 1413, tempera on panel, 8' x 12' 3" (450 x 350 cm), Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy.

Gentile da Fabriano:

Adoration of the Magi and detail from the predella: *Flight into Egypt*, 1423, tempera on panel, overall: 9' 10" x 9' 3" (300 x 283 cm), Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy.

Further Reading:

John White, *Art and Architecture in Italy, 1250–1400*.

Millard Meiss, *Painting in Florence and Siena after the Black Death*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Describe the ways that the Black Death influenced painting in the 14th century in Italy.
2. What elements of the International style depend on earlier painting?

Lecture Eleven

Early Renaissance Sculpture in Florence

Scope: We begin this lecture by exploring the reasons that sculpture, rather than painting, led to the development of the Renaissance style. We will also single out and discuss several great sculptors of the early 15th century, including Brunelleschi, Ghiberti, Donatello, and Luca della Robbia. We will describe their significant contributions and discover how they used sculpture as a medium to invent new ways to portray the human body in space. We will look at Brunelleschi's and Ghiberti's Baptistery doors, Donatello's *David*, and Luca della Robbia's *Cantoria*.

Outline

- I. The first crucial steps in the creation of the Renaissance style were taken by sculptors, not painters.
 - A. Roman architectural innovations, including the use of the arch, provided the model for Romanesque architects, and Romanesque architecture provided the starting point for Gothic architecture.
 - B. Relief sculpture decorating marble sarcophagi provided models for figure poses and for style and technique.
 - C. Christianity assimilated much of the Roman tradition, and because Rome was home to the papacy, Christian art included constant references to and borrowings from Roman art.
 1. Charlemagne borrowed the ground plan of San Vitale in Ravenna for use in Aachen because of its imperial and religious associations.
 2. Manuscript illuminators searching for a model for the imaginary portraits of the four evangelists seized upon the Greco-Roman portraits of Classical authors.
 - D. The Renaissance was born in Italy in part because that was the center of the Roman Empire, where the most complete and impressive physical remains of the ancient artistic achievement were found. Also, the major patronage of Renaissance art came from the Roman Catholic Church, also centered in Italy. Thus, early-15th-century sculpture was bound to reflect Roman sculpture.
 - E. Early Renaissance sculpture often was used to decorate architecture, as Roman sculpture had been in antiquity (e.g., relief carvings on friezes). Because early-15th-century artists were trying to portray the human figure in space and because sculpture is three-dimensional, it was logical that sculpture took the lead and that painting soon followed.

II. Two of the most important sculptors of the early 15th century were Lorenzo Ghiberti and Filippo Brunelleschi, although Brunelleschi is most famous as an architect.

A. Brunelleschi was one of seven entrants in a competition held in 1401 to design a second set of bronze doors for the Baptistery adjacent to the façade of the Cathedral of Florence. The Baptistery has three entrances and already had one set of bronze doors by Andrea Pisano (c. 1330). The finalists in the competition were Brunelleschi and Ghiberti. The subject assigned to them was the sacrifice of Isaac.

B. In Brunelleschi's *Sacrifice of Isaac* (c. 1401), Isaac is kneeling on an altar in the center, an angel is emerging, and a ram can be seen in the left foreground. Note the angular and forceful design, with the angel physically restraining Abraham. The quatrefoil design is used here, and the figures were made separately, then fused onto the door.

C. Ghiberti's *Sacrifice of Isaac* (c. 1401) is in strong contrast. Ghiberti's depiction of Isaac is Classical. The angel here gestures to Abraham, instead of grasping his arm as in Brunelleschi's depiction. Ghiberti was awarded the commission.

D. Our example shows an aerial view of the Baptistery in Florence. Ghiberti's North Doors (his first set of doors) for the Baptistery (c. 1403–1424) narrate the life of Christ, the four evangelists, and the four theological fathers of the Church. There are 28 panels with the quatrefoil design.

1. Our example shows *The Flagellation*, a symmetrical composition.
2. These doors took 20 years to complete, and they were such a success that Ghiberti received a commission soon after for another set of doors for the third entrance to the Baptistery.

III. Ghiberti's East Doors (Gates of Paradise) (c. 1425–1452) were radically different from the earlier ones.

A. The 28 panels and the quatrefoil shape within which the sculptural figures had been fitted were abandoned. The new doors had 10 panels, five in each valve, and each panel was square. These larger fields were similar to those used in painting and allowed Ghiberti to develop a style of relief sculpture with illusionistic architecture and space. Each panel is completely gilded.

B. The doors show 10 scenes from Genesis, reading from top left, across and down. These include the creation of Adam and Eve through their expulsion from Eden, followed by the stories of Cain and Abel, Abraham, and Jacob. We will look at the panels from the top left, the *Creation of Man*, and the third down on the left, the *Story of Joseph*.

1. The *Creation of Man* describes, from left to right, the creation of Adam, the creation of Eve, and the expulsion from the garden.

Note particularly the subject of the temptation/fall in the left background.

2. *Joseph and His Brothers* depicts Joseph, the youngest of Jacob's sons and his favorite, and his eight jealous older brothers. One scene shows the brothers selling Joseph into slavery.

3. Joseph gains fame as he serves Potiphar, an official of Pharaoh; interprets the Pharaoh's dreams; and averts famine in Egypt. Famine in other countries compelled Joseph's brothers to come to Egypt for grain, but they did not recognize Joseph. Joseph had a silver cup hidden in the grain sack of Benjamin who, born after Joseph's slavery, had become his father's favorite. Another scene shows the sack being inspected. When the cup is found, the brothers plead on Benjamin's behalf, and Joseph then reveals himself.

C. In all the panels on this set of doors, we have seen that Ghiberti retains the medieval device of simultaneous narration, showing a sequence of events in the same continuous setting. This remained fairly common in the early 15th century. The doors, however, are in a fully Renaissance style.

D. This second set of doors, known since the 16th century as the Gates of Paradise, is one of the supreme achievements of the early Renaissance. Instantly famous, the doors were installed on the east side, the side facing the cathedral, causing Ghiberti's first set of doors to be moved to the north side.

1. Their name came from Michelangelo, who was said to have remarked that they were worthy to be the gates of paradise.
2. The remark may have been a pun, because the piazza between the Duomo and Baptistery was known as the Paradise, an allusion to the salvation of the sacrament of baptism. Thus, these doors would have been the gates to the Paradise and to Paradise itself.

IV. The greatest Florentine sculptor of the 15th century, and probably the most influential artist in Italy at the time, was Donato di Niccolò Bardi, known as Donatello (1386–1466). He apprenticed with Ghiberti and worked on the preparation of the north doors for the baptistery, but his artistic temperament was quite different. He had technical genius in both marble and bronze, and throughout his life, his work was endlessly inventive and deeply moving.

A. Our example shows Donatello's marble sculpture *St. George* (c. 1415), which was commissioned for a niche on the exterior of the civic guild hall in Florence, known as Orsanmichele. The guilds that controlled the niches were required to commission sculptures for them.

1. The Armorer's Guild chose the warrior figure of St. George to represent its members and commissioned Donatello to carve what became his most important early work.

2. The sculpture is heroic and lifelike. It was originally crowned by a real helmet and held a real sword, both made by the Armorer's Guild.
- B. The *St. George and the Dragon* is a marble relief sculpture (c. 1415–1417) below the niche of the *St. George* sculpture.
1. The shallow carving in the background is unprecedented. This *flattened relief* is Donatello's invention and his means of suggesting atmospheric effects.
 2. This technique was remarkably influential; in fact, Ghiberti used the sculptural illusionism brilliantly in his *Gates of Paradise*.
- C. In the *Feast of Herod* (c. 1427, Siena, Baptistery), Herod is presented with the head of St. John the Baptist. The work is infused with emotion and horror.
- D. Donatello's most famous work is probably his bronze *David* (c. early 1430s). The Medici owned this sculpture, but we don't know if they commissioned it. It was the first life-size, freestanding, fully-in-the-round, bronze male nude statue since antiquity.
1. Our example shows a front view of *David*. It is sensuously modeled, sinuously posed, and superbly cast in bronze, an aesthetic, as well as a technical, quality. The figure imitates adolescent flesh with its sinuous lines.
 2. From the back view, David is shown after he has decapitated Goliath; the head lies beneath his left foot. Although David is not a patron saint, he is one of the protectors of Florence and symbolically important.
 3. The biblical David is an adolescent shepherd boy, and although he turned down the offer of protective armor, it is unclear why he is nude. If he were totally nude, it would suggest that Donatello borrowed the nudity of Classical heroes for his biblical character. But he is not totally nude, and the hat and boots call attention to the nudity in an un-Classical way.
 4. Note the effeminate and androgynous appearance of the boy. Some have speculated that Donatello was homosexual. Regardless, the nudity must have been acceptable to the Medici or whoever commissioned the statue. No other similarly sensuous and strangely erotic work had been created in Florence before *David*.
- V. Luca della Robbia (1400–1482) was also one of the great sculptors of the Florentine Renaissance, yet his name often does not garner the same attention as Donatello.
- A. This may be because he made many glazed terracotta sculptures, popular art sometimes slighted as “decorative art.” Luca invented the means of applying the fused lead and glass compounds used by potters to terracotta sculpture, and his family kept the process secret for

centuries, running a highly profitable business. Luca's work in stone sculpture is less well known but is proof of his artistic genius.

- B. We will look at his most famous achievement, his *Cantoria* (c. 1431–1438), or “singing gallery,” produced for the Florence Cathedral. This is a marble choir gallery, 17 feet wide, that was located over the door to the left-hand sacristy in the cathedral. Singers and instrumentalists performed from this elegant perch.
1. The decoration consists of 10 panels depicting children as musical genies. Our example shows eight square panels in two levels on the front, and one rectangular panel on each end. The front panels are separated by pilasters above and brackets below, and on three horizontal bands is inscribed Psalm 150, “Praise ye the Lord.../Praise him with the timbrel and dance:/Praise him with stringed instruments and organs./Praise him upon the loud cymbals./Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord.”
 2. Luca's work depicts young instrumentalists, trumpeters, with dancers singing and cavorting below them. Note particularly the end panel—the older boys singing in the choir whose faces Luca has observed closely. Luca renders adolescent flesh equal to Donatello's in the bronze *David* but without the erotic undercurrent.

Works Discussed:

Filippo Brunelleschi:

Sacrifice of Isaac, 1401, gilt bronze, 21 x 17" (53.3 x 43.4 cm), Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence, Italy.

Lorenzo Ghiberti:

Sacrifice of Isaac, 1401, gilt bronze, 21 x 17" (53.3 x 43.4), Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence, Italy.

North Doors (original East Doors), 1403–24, gilt bronze, 15' H (4.57 m H), Baptistery, Florence, Italy.

The Flagellation, 1403–24, gilt bronze, 20 ½ x 17 ¾" (53 x 45 cm), from the North Doors, Baptistery, Florence, Italy.

East Doors (Gates of Paradise), 1425–52, gilt bronze, 15' H (4.57 m H), Baptistery, Florence, Italy.

Creation of Man and *Joseph and His Brothers*, 1425–52, from the East Doors (Gates of Paradise), gilt bronze, 31¼" square (79.5 cm square), Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Florence, Italy.

Donatello:

St. George, c. 1415, marble, 6' 10" H (210 cm H), Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence, Italy.

St. George and the Dragon, c. 1415, marble, 15 ¾" H (40 cm H), Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence, Italy.

Feast of Herod, c. 1427, gilt bronze, 23 ½" square (59.7 cm square), Baptistery, Siena, Italy.

David, 1430s, bronze, 5' 2 ¼" H (158 cm H), Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence, Italy.

Luca della Robbia:

Cantoria, c. 1431–38, marble, 17' W (5 m W), Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Florence, Italy.

Further Reading:

Roberta J. M. Olson, *Italian Renaissance Sculpture*.

John Pope-Hennessy, *Italian Renaissance Sculpture: An Introduction to Italian Sculpture*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Why did sculpture precede painting in the creation of a Renaissance style? How did Renaissance sculpture influence painting?
2. How do you think Donatello's *David* was viewed in the 15th century?

Lecture Twelve

Early Renaissance Architecture in Florence

Scope: We return to Florence to examine some spectacular and influential architecture of the early 15th century. Looking closely at some of these buildings, we discover how Renaissance architects solved major construction dilemmas with new methods and inventions. The lecture focuses on works by Brunelleschi and Alberti.

Outline

- I. In this panorama of Florence, we see the Duomo (the Cathedral of Florence), the tower of Town Hall, and the Guild Hall, among other buildings. In this lecture, we will discuss some of the most important examples of 15th-century architecture.
- II. One famous example is Brunelleschi's Hospital of the Innocents, an orphanage designed in 1419 and begun in 1421. The building, although elegant, may not seem impressive or epochal, probably because it is the model for hundreds of later buildings and we have grown accustomed to it. However, it played an important role in the urban development of Renaissance Florence.
 - A. Brunelleschi was commissioned to design the building, because the orphanage was considered an integral part of the society. The hospital was sited at a right angle to the Church of Santissima Annunziata ("Most Holy Annunciation"), a major pilgrimage church in Florence.
 - B. A new street had just been constructed between the SS. Annunziata Church and the Duomo, with an unobstructed view between them. There were also two existing streets entering the space in front of the church from the side where the hospital was built. By incorporating the passages from those two streets into his façade (on the extreme ends), Brunelleschi unified the piazza and his building.
 - C. Brunelleschi intended that a matching arcaded building should one day balance his structure on the opposite side, and in the 16th century, one was built. His perfectly proportioned arcade dictated the use of the same forms in the adjacent building.
 1. This arcade is the most striking aspect of the façade, but the whole building is based on two geometric modules, the cube and the hemisphere. The generous span of the arches, carried on Corinthian columns, is emphasized by the broad horizontal of the cornice. The second-story windows are above the apex of each arch, providing a rhythmic counterpoint.
 2. We see the roundels of infants by Andrea della Robbia (1460s or 1480s). The 10 glazed terracotta roundels in the pendentives of the

C. The next image represents the façade of the church of Santa Maria Novella (c. 1458–1470, Florence) by Alberti. Giovanni Rucellai also paid the commission to finish this façade. Alberti was asked to design the façade to complete the earlier church, although a façade had been commenced around 1300, and the Gothic elements and typically Italian use of contrasting colors of marble introduced then are still present.

1. Alberti introduced the arcade on the lower story to unite the earlier elements, then designed a wide strip—more a mezzanine than a frieze—to separate the two stories. The second story is given a temple-like appearance, dominated by a large rose window and a steep gable.
2. The problem of church façade design stemmed from elevation, with three naves below and a narrower clerestory level. To make the transition less abrupt (and to disguise the buttress supports for the upper walls of the central nave), Alberti introduced two spectacular volutes. They are decorative and double-curved to smooth out the composition, and they have an important structural role.

VI. Outside of Florence, Alberti designed two churches in Mantua. Our example shows one of these, Sant' Andrea, designed in 1470 but built after Alberti's death.

- A. Here, Alberti has produced a great temple, with deep roots in the imperial Roman architectural tradition. The tripartite façade is derived directly from the Roman triumphal arch.
- B. Compare the Sant' Andrea façade and the Arch of Titus (81 A.D.). Instead of the attic story on the Roman arch, Alberti tops his façade with a temple gable.
- C. Our example shows the Sant' Andrea nave. Its barrel-vaulted single nave and its transverse barrel-vaulted chapels are borrowed from the Basilica of Constantine in Rome (c. 310–320 A.D.).
- D. This church became one of the most influential models for later churches, from Bramante and Michelangelo's new St. Peter's in Rome to well into the 17th and 18th centuries.
- E. Alberti is one of the seminal figures in Renaissance culture because of his architecture and because of his writings on art and architectural theory and practice.

Works Discussed:

Filippo Brunelleschi:

Cathedral of Sta. Maria del Fiore (Duomo), Florence, Italy.

Ospedale degli Innocenti (Foundling Hospital), 1419–24, Piazza SS. Annunziata, Florence, Italy.

Pazzi Chapel, c. 1440–61, Church of Sta. Croce, Florence, Italy.

Church of S. Lorenzo, begun 1419, Florence, Italy.

Leon Battista Alberti:

Self-Portrait, 1435, bronze medallion, 8 x 5 ½" (20.3 x 13 cm), Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, France.

Palazzo Rucellai, c. 1452–70, Florence, Italy.

Church of Sta. Maria Novella, 1458–70, Florence, Italy.

Church of S. Andrea, begun 1470, Mantua, Italy.

Further Reading:

Ross King, *Brunelleschi's Dome: The Story of the Great Cathedral in Florence*.

Peter Murray, *The Architecture of the Italian Renaissance*.

Questions to Consider:

1. How does architecture reflect our cultural traditions and values? (Consider Brunelleschi's Hospital of the Innocents. Would this be built today?)
2. Many architects, such as Brunelleschi and Alberti, were also artists. How are the two subjects related?

Timeline

800	Coronation of Charlemagne (742–814)
840	Death of Louis the Pious, Charlemagne's successor, and outbreak of a war of succession
962	Coronation of Otto I, first emperor of the Holy Roman Empire
c. 1000–1160	Period of Romanesque architecture
1066	Norman conquest of England at the Battle of Hastings; work begins on the Bayeux Tapestry
1096–1099	First Crusade
c. 1160–1500	Gothic style in art and architecture, exemplified by Notre Dame Cathedral (1163–1250)
1147–1149	Second Crusade
1189–1192	Third Crusade
1194–1220	Rebuilding of Chartres Cathedral after it was destroyed by fire in 1194; the new structure is a masterpiece of the full Gothic style
1200	Rebuilding of Rouen Cathedral begun after its destruction by fire
1202–1204	Fourth Crusade
c. 1260	<i>Golden Legend</i> written by Jacobus de Voragine
1303–1305/10	Painting of the 38 frescoes of the Arena Chapel by Giotto di Bondone, precursor of the Renaissance
1309–1378	Avignon Papacy
1308–1311	Painting of the <i>Maestà</i> by Duccio di Buoninsegna
1337	Beginning of the Hundred Years' War
1338–1339	Frescoes in the Palazzo Pubblico in Siena, <i>Allegories of Good and Bad Government</i> , painted by Ambrogio Lorenzetti

1348–1350	Black Death sweeps across Europe, decimating populations
c. 1350–1450	Rise of Humanism
c. 1380–1420	International Gothic style
c. 1400–1550	Italian and Northern Renaissance
1403–1424, 1425–1452	Design and completion of doors for the Baptistry of Florence by Lorenzo Ghiberti
1415, 1430–1432	Donatello carves <i>St. George</i> for Orsanmichele in Florence
1419	Design of the Hospital of the Innocents, Florence, by Brunelleschi
1420–1436	Design and construction of the dome of the Florence Cathedral by Brunelleschi
1424–1427	Fresco cycle in the Brancacci Chapel, S. Maria del Carmine, Florence, begun by Masolino and continued by Masaccio, whose achievement was the first great landmark of Italian Renaissance painting
1430–1432	Donatello models <i>David</i> in Florence, probably commissioned by the Medici
c. 1434	<i>Arnolfini Wedding Portrait</i> by Jan van Eyck
1435	Leon Battista Alberti publishes <i>On Painting</i> , a treatise that includes the first description of the method of linear perspective
c. 1435	Completion of Rogier van der Weyden's <i>Deposition</i>
1452–1459	Painting of the <i>Legend of the True Cross</i> , in Arezzo, fresco cycle by Piero della Francesca
1453	End of the Hundred Years' War
1469	Lorenzo de' Medici ("the Magnificent") becomes ruler of Florence and one of the greatest cultural patrons of the Renaissance
1474	Mantegna completes the <i>camera picta</i> , "painted room," in the Gonzaga Ducal Palace in Mantua

1478 The Spanish Inquisition established

1482 *The Birth of Venus* by Botticelli

c. 1495–1498 *The Last Supper* by Leonardo da Vinci

c. 1495–1500 *Lamentation* by Botticelli

1497–1498 Trial and execution of the Dominican friar Savonarola, who had preached against the excessive materialism of the Medici and Florentine society

c. 1498 Albrecht Dürer's woodcut *Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*

1498–1499 Michelangelo designs and carves the *Pietà* for the tomb of a French cardinal in the Basilica of St. Peter's

1501–1504 Michelangelo carves monumental statue of *David* in Florence

1503–1506 *Mona Lisa* by Leonardo da Vinci

1505 Giovanni Bellini paints his masterpiece of the Venetian High Renaissance style, the San Zaccaria Altarpiece, Venice

c. 1505–1510 Painting of the famous triptych *Garden of Earthly Delights* by Hieronymus Bosch

1508–1511 Painting of the Sistine Chapel ceiling by Michelangelo

1510 Matthias Grünewald begins work on the Isenheim Altarpiece

c. 1510–1511 *Pastoral Concert* by Giorgione

1510–1514 Raphael paints the *Stanzae*, the rooms of the papal apartments in the Vatican

1517 Beginning of the Protestant Reformation

c. 1520 Beginnings of Mannerism

1522 *Bacchus and Ariadne* painted by Titian for the rulers of Ferrara

c. 1526–1530 Antonio Correggio paints the *Assumption of the Virgin* in the cathedral at Parma, which served as the principal model for illusionistic

dome paintings of the Baroque and subsequent eras

1527 Sack of Rome by the troops of Emperor Charles V

1535–1541 Michelangelo frescoes his *Last Judgment* on the altar wall of the Sistine Chapel

1545–1563 Council of Trent; beginning of the Catholic Counter-Reformation

c. 1558 *Fall of Icarus* by Pieter Bruegel the Elder

1561 Spain withdraws troops from the Netherlands, leading to the rapid spread of the Protestant Reformation

1567 Philip II of Spain re-invades the Netherlands, intent on crushing the Reformation

1568 Northern Netherlands revolts against Spain; beginning of the Eighty Years' War; *Blind Leading the Blind* by Pieter Bruegel the Elder

1575–1675 Golden age of Spanish painting

c. 1580–1585 Founding of an anti-Mannerist teaching academy in Bologna by Annibale, Ludovico, and Agostino Carracci

1585–1590 Papacy of Sixtus V; beginning of the recovery of Rome after the Sack

1590s *The Agony in the Garden* by El Greco; beginning of the Baroque in Italy

c. 1596–1597 *Rest on the Flight into Egypt* by Caravaggio

1597–1600 Frescoes of the Farnese Gallery, Rome, by Annibale Carracci

c. 1622–1625 Rubens paints the Marie de' Medici cycle

1624 Bernini begins work in and on the Basilica of St. Peter's continuing on and off until his death

c. 1640–1642 *Night Watch* by Rembrandt

1645–1651	<i>Fountain of the Four Rivers</i> , Piazza Navona, Rome, by Bernini
1648	Treaty of Münster, end of the Eighty Years' War; Fronde Parliament
1656	<i>The Maids of Honor</i> by Velázquez
1661–1715	Louis XIV reigns as absolute monarch in France
1662	<i>The Syndics of the Cloth Guild</i> by Rembrandt
1662–1665	<i>The Art of Painting</i> by Vermeer
1676–1708	Design and construction of the Palace of Versailles, with Louis Le Vau as architect and André Le Nôtre as landscape architect
1682	French court moves to Versailles
1720s–1760s	Rococo style in France
1748	Archaeological discoveries at Pompeii and Herculaneum bring about renewed interest in ancient art and Renaissance Classicism
c. 1770–1850	Neoclassicism and Romanticism
1775–1783	American Revolution
1789–1793	French Revolution
1792	French invasion of Austria, launching a series of wars of “liberation” initiated by the French armies
1793	Execution of King Louis XVI and his queen, Marie Antoinette; murder of Jean-Paul Marat; Reign of Terror
1796	French invasion of Italy
1798	Invention of lithography
1799	Napoleonic campaigns in the Holy Land
1799–1804	Consulate of Napoleon
1804	Napoleon declares himself emperor
1808	Napoleon compels King Charles IV of Spain to abdicate in favor of his brother, Joseph Bonaparte; open revolts erupt across Spain

1814	Napoleon deposed
1815	Defeated at Waterloo, Napoleon exiled to St. Helena
1816	The frigate <i>Medusa</i> founders off the coast of Africa and only 15 of its passengers survive; the incident inspires Géricault's <i>Raft of the Medusa</i>
1821–1828	Greek war for independence against the Turks
1830	July Revolution in France; Louis-Philippe, the “Citizen King,” installed on the throne
c. 1840–1900	Realism, a style which can include Impressionism, but is best exemplified by the paintings of Courbet and Millet
1848	Failed revolutions across Europe; Louis-Philippe is overthrown
1852	Louis Napoleon declares himself Emperor Napoleon III, establishing the Second Empire in France
1854–1855	<i>Interior of My Studio: A Real Allegory of Seven Years of My Life as a Painter</i> by Courbet
1855	Universal Exhibition in Paris; Courbet's Pavilion of Realism
1863	Salon des Refusés, show of rejected Salon paintings; Manet's <i>Luncheon on the Grass</i>
1870–1871	Franco-Prussian War; siege of Paris (September 19, 1870)
1871	Revolt in Paris leads to civil war (the Commune)
1873	<i>Impression: Sunrise</i> by Monet, the painting that would give its name to Impressionism
1874	First of eight pioneering exhibitions of Impressionists (the last in 1886)
1876	<i>L'Absinthe (At the Café)</i> by Degas
1880–1887	Rodin at work on the <i>The Gates of Hell</i>

1881	<i>Luncheon of the Boating Party</i> by Renoir
1884–1886	<i>Sunday Afternoon on the Island of the Grande Jatte</i> by Seurat
1889	<i>The Starry Night</i> by Van Gogh
1905	First application of the term <i>Fauve</i> to the art of Henri Matisse
1906–1907	Beginning of Cubism with Picasso's <i>Les Femmes d'Alger (O.J. Version O)</i>
c. 1912	Movement known as <i>De Stijl</i>
1913	<i>Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2</i> (1912), by Duchamp, shown at 1913 Armory Show in New York; Birth of the Constructivist art movement in Russia
1914–1918	World War I
1916	Term <i>Dada</i> coined by Tristan Tzara
1917–1918	Picasso develops his Neoclassical style, which reached its apogee with <i>Three Women at the Spring</i> (1921)
1924	Beginnings of Surrealism
1929–1939	Great Depression
1936–1939	Spanish Civil War; bombing of Guernica (April 26, 1937)
1939–1945	World War II